

Curricular Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate

MEMO

To: The UVM Faculty Senate

From: Curricular Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate, Laura Almstead, Chair

Date: September 3, 2020

Re: Items approved by the Curricular Affairs Committee that do not require a Faculty Senate vote

Request for an online option for the existing CGS in Complex Systems and Data Science (CEMS, Graduate College)

The College of Engineering and Mathematical Sciences (CEMS) submitted a request in conjunction with the Graduate College for an online option for the existing Certificate of Graduate Studies (CGS) in Complex Systems and Data Science (CSDS), which was initiated in 2008. This request received unanimous and enthusiastic approval from the Graduate College Executive Committee.

For the past three years, the CGS in CSDS has averaged 16 students enrolled per year as a secondary curriculum to their master's or doctoral program, and another two students per year taking it as their only curriculum. The goal of providing an online version is to attract students from outside the local area. Additionally, residential students may find it easier to access courses in the curriculum in the online format as there would be no timing conflict with their other commitments. Reaching a broader student audience is also predicted to result in enrollment gains in the existing CSDS master's and doctoral degrees, which were developed as an outcome of the success of the CGS in Complex Systems and Data Science.

Importantly, the online curriculum for the CGS in CSDS is identical to the residential curriculum. In any given term, courses will be offered in both online and face-to-face formats, and students in the program can choose either mode of delivery for each of their courses (i.e. they can take a mix of face-to-face and online courses if they choose). The proposed online option is supported by significant investment from CEMS to ensure a successful launch and the quality of the online instruction. They have hired a lecturer with significant online experience to work with all the faculty. In addition, the majority of the faculty will take or have taken the bootcamp version of Teaching Effectively Online at UVM.

Note that as of May 2020, changes in delivery mode for a program (e.g. offering a program online) and duplication of a program through an alternative delivery mode are no longer considered substantial curricular changes as long as the curriculum itself does not change and students can take courses in either or both formats. The requirement to submit a substantial change proposal for changes in delivery mode was based on a previous NECHE policy relating to online programs that no longer exists. The request for the online option of the CGS in CSDS was submitted in April 2020, which is why the request was considered by the CAC and is being reported to the Faculty Senate.