AAS Information Technology Summary and Justification for Changes

Change Summary –

At first glance, this is a major change. We are adjusting our area of emphasis approach to improve flexibility for students, workforce reskilling or workforce upskilling. The inclusion of electives presents itself as a dramatic change. The typical student schedule for the current default degree path is two new courses, one different general education course and a change to how the internship path will be taken as a single course.

The typical student schedule has been adjusted so that all students will take the same technical courses in their first year. This is a huge improvement for scheduling.

The foremost statement is for the base degree plan, which is presently AAS IT IS emphasis we are proposing changing ENGL& 235 Technical Writing with CMST&101 Introduction to Communication, Inclusion of three new 5-credit courses IS166 Secure Mobile Computing and IS222 Secure Cloud Computing and IS288 Cooperative Work Experience (no seminar). The new courses will be replacing IS 132 Computer Law and Ethics (5-credits), IS210 Internet Programming (5-credits), IS266 Coop Work Seminar (1-Credit) and IS267 Coop Work Experience (1-credit). We are also re-phrasing our Math requirement to encourage our students to take higher level math courses if they intend to pursue BAS degrees. The total changes are 17 credits out of 90 (approximately 19%).

Change Justification –

The motivation for changes to accommodate ever changing needs of the technical professional career field. The two new courses add high demand skills, replacing aging and lower demand skills. The proposed changes in the degree plan presents a better emphasis structure by introducing electives to the degree. Our base AAS IT degree has been a ‘generalist’ style degree building a base of skills needed by most technical professions. Previous specialties were collapsed to ease student advising and course scheduling. Our current degree includes two first quarter courses to assist students in selecting the pathway that best fits their interests. A recent shift to online offerings has greatly eased issues with course scheduling. As we look forward, this model will make it easier to add or remove areas of emphasis to meet constant changing skill demands.

A secondary impact is a more intentional path for students seeking a BAS. Over 70% of our first quarter students declare their interest in starting the AAS as the first step of obtaining the BAS. These changes leave the AAS IT degree as an employable degree but align the general education course requirements of the BAS degree to better meet the needs of industry and the students in both degree paths.

The last item of note is that we have done a significant review of the AAS IT degree. Many of the courses have had course learning outcomes and course descriptions adjusted. Many of the courses have not been updated since they were implemented in 2006. Our designation as an NSA Center of Academic Excellence is the guide and motivator for this process.