An Action Plan for the
Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies (MAIS)
Graduate Program

The Graduate School
Oregon State University

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Introduction

The Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies (MAIS) program underwent a comprehensive review in 2013. This review included the preparation of a self-study and an on-site review, and concluded with a number of recommendations to strengthen the MAIS program.

The review panel recommended the following:

1. Expand the focus of the MAIS beyond the College of Liberal Arts, possibly including serving as an incubator for new interdisciplinary graduate programs, and increasing the Director appointment to .5 FTE or adding a Co-Director from STEM disciplines.
2. Rebrand and market the MAIS to attract top applicants and bolster the program’s reputation.
3. Consider adding a writing requirement for applicants, and perhaps using GRE or GMAT scores.
4. Continue core MAIS courses and add a third on research methods.
5. Add a required research colloquium series for 2nd year students, either in addition to or in lieu of a third required core course.
6. Develop “tracks” in disciplines that cohorts could take together.
7. Establish one or two admissions cycles instead of continuing rolling admissions.
8. Require the same number of credits in each area of study.
9. Consider requiring an appendix to every thesis or project that provides an account of how interdisciplinary scholarship was achieved.
10. Develop a handbook for MAIS faculty and advisors.
11. Provide a “home” for MAIS students either in the form of a physical space or continuation of IST courses into the 2nd year.
12. Track information on students in a way that is accessible to departments and faculty.

These recommendations, along with the discussion of the MAIS program in the review panel’s full report, all point to several broad objectives. In general, they aim to broaden the appeal of the MAIS beyond the College of Liberal Arts; achieve a greater sense of interdisciplinarity in students’ work and their identity on campus; clarify the roles, responsibilities, and opportunities for MAIS students and faculty; improve program administration; and enhance the reputation of the program. In order to achieve these outcomes, the MAIS program proposes to take action on several fronts. The Action Plan below includes concrete steps to be taken, an implementation timeframe, and metrics for evaluation and assessment.
**Action Plan**

*Recommendation 1: Expand the focus of the MAIS beyond the College of Liberal Arts, possibly including serving as an incubator for new interdisciplinary graduate programs, and increasing the Director appointment to .5 FTE or adding a Co-Director from STEM disciplines.*

*Goal 1: Expand the focus of the MAIS by serving as an incubator for new interdisciplinary programs.*

The process of developing new degree programs at OSU is labor and time intensive, requiring the development of a Category I proposal and a long approval process. Having the MAIS house proposed new interdisciplinary programs in order to test their feasibility can allow faculty and students to engage interdisciplinary projects earlier than could otherwise be achieved, while testing whether a program can be sustainable.

This is, in part, one of the functions that the MAIS already serves. The graduate program in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS) began by admitting students into the MAIS. For several years, students seeking a focus in WGSS used the MAIS degree as a vehicle to earn a degree in their area of study. Currently, Speech Communication and Psychology use the MAIS as the degree program for graduate students interested in those areas. Both of these programs are now pursuing their own degree programs. In all three of these cases, students have included three different fields of study to create an interdisciplinary program of study (two of the three can come from the same department if they are recognized as distinct concentrations). The MAIS can and should continue in this role of growing new programs, and doing so beyond the scope of the College of Liberal Arts will expand the focus of the program and increase awareness of interdisciplinary value on campus.

A suitable test case is required to see if this recommendation would work, and one is available. The MAIS has begun collaborating with a working group on campus that includes Engineering, Liberal Arts, Forestry, Public Health, and Agriculture. The aim is to build a new degree in the area of “Development Practice,” a growing field that integrates natural and social sciences, management, and health into an interdisciplinary education aimed toward addressing the problem of sustainable development. This effort enjoys enthusiasm and support from those currently engaged. An appropriate first step, explained in the response to Recommendation 6, is to develop an MAIS “track,” or concentration in this area of study, and this process has already begun. There is also an organization, Global MDP, that seeks to support institutions in developing a Master’s degree in Development Practice (www.globalmdp.org). The OSU working group has applied and been accepted as an affiliate member of Global MDP, which will provide connection to a network of people and organizations interested in building MDP programs. The goal of the working group is to eventually create a new degree program, and the MAIS program is central to launching this effort, as students pursuing studies in Development Practice will be enrolled in the MAIS program. To the extent that there is sustained student and faculty interest in Development
Practice, along with support from chairs, program directors, deans and administrators, the working group would then begin the process required to initiate an MDP degree.

Action Item:
The MAIS program will serve as an incubator for a degree program in Development Practice, starting with the development of an MAIS track. The initial process for achieving this goal will be the same as that specified in response to Recommendation 6 (the creation of tracks). Developing a track will include identifying eligible classes from different programs across campus, developing sample programs of study, and creating a page on the MAIS website to communicate all the necessary information to students. The MAIS program will engage in outreach to departments and programs across campus to let faculty and advisors (undergraduate and graduate) know about this new concentration.

Metric:
The success of this effort will be measured by the number of students pursuing a track in Development Practice within the MAIS program. Within three years of its launch, Development Practice will have a minimum of three new students per year in the track, for a total of 5-6 students at any given time.

Goal 2: Expand the focus of the MAIS by increasing the Director appointment to .5 FTE or adding a Co-Director from STEM disciplines

The review panel suggested possibly expanding the appointment of the MAIS Director to .5 FTE, or adding a Co-Director from one of the STEM disciplines, to allow for broader program outreach, appeal, and participation. However, we recommend against this approach. It is uncommon to have Co-Directors for graduate programs, due to the cost and feasibility of management. Moreover, since the MAIS has no faculty or facilities of its own, and only two courses it offers (soon to be three), employing two directors also seems unnecessary, especially in comparison to other programs on campus. Considering the Director’s current level of responsibility, the .25 FTE seems both reasonable and consistent (or better) than the level of FTE provided to other program directors on campus whose appointments include teaching, research, service, and administration.

A more suitable approach to achieve this goal is to provide additional support to the MAIS program. The program currently obtains administrative support each year from one of the participating programs (for tasks such as retrieval of data from Banner and the Data Warehouse, room and course scheduling, etc.), but these needs are limited, and the staff person tends to change every year. Instead, the MAIS should employ an assistant to take on more substantive work in supporting the program. This includes tasks such as outreach to faculty, development of new tracks, and improvement of the MAIS website, all of which would be in the service of expanding the scope of the program. The Dean of the Graduate School has already suggested a funding model that includes a .25 FTE Director, and a .25 FTE for program
support. To that end, the MAIS program will adopt this funding model, and align it with its staffing needs.

Action Item:
The MAIS Director will obtain the necessary approvals from the Graduate School and from the Business Center to hire the MAIS support staff, and will engage in making this hire. (One person has already been approached about this possibility; he is currently employed by OSU in a temporary position, and a portion of his FTE could potentially come from the MAIS.) One new .25 FTE staff person will be added to the MAIS beginning in September 2014.

Metric:
The success of this goal will be measured by greater variation in the areas of study pursued by MAIS students. Currently, approximately 85% of all MAIS areas of study are in the College of Liberal Arts. It is expected that this total will be lower than 60% in three years.

Recommendation 2: Rebrand and market the MAIS to attract top applicants and bolster the program’s reputation.

Goal: Rebrand the MAIS program and market it as a dynamic driver of creativity.

Continued success of the MAIS program offers the most effective marketing. The rebranding and marketing of the program therefore is a goal to cultivate over time, and one that will be served by successful implementation of all the other recommendations mentioned in this report. At the same time, there are also specific and immediate actions that can be taken to communicate MAIS opportunities available to students and faculty, and highlight the program’s successes. Three actions should be taken as a start to support this effort:

1. Creation of success stories
2. Development of an MAIS fact sheet
3. Highlighting several theses (all theses will be listed on the web).

Action Items:
Student Success – The MAIS Director will work with MAIS major advisors to develop three student success stories. Each will be a brief profile of an MAIS student, highlighting academic and/or career achievements. These will be posted on the MAIS website, and will be available in hard copy and PDF for distribution to prospective students and to OSU faculty.

MAIS Fact Sheet – The MAIS program will develop an MAIS fact sheet, highlighting the advantages and strengths of the program (such as using an interdisciplinary approach to address complex problems, the
ability to create a tailored program of study, examples of post-graduation employment, success stories, interesting theses and projects). This will be on the website, and available as a PDF and hard copy. It will also be sent to all undergraduate and graduate Advisors at OSU.

**Thesis Highlight** – The MAIS Director will create a “MAIS Student Research” page on the program website. This will feature five theses as particularly strong/interesting examples of interdisciplinary research. The page will also include a list of all MAIS theses in the OSU Scholars Archive.

The first two success stories will be completed and posted on the MAIS website by the end of fall term 2014. An additional success story will be completed by the end of spring term 2015. After that, one or two new profiles will be added each year as deemed appropriate. The fact sheet will be completed and distributed to all OSU departments and programs by the end of fall term 2014. The “MAIS Student Research” webpage, including five featured theses, will be completed by the end of winter 2015.

**Metrics:**
In addition to the completion of the tasks above within the specified timeframe, the success of this goal will be measured in a similar manner to the previous goal: by greater variation in the areas of study pursued by MAIS students. Currently, approximately 85% of all MAIS areas of study are in the College of Liberal Arts. It is expected that this total will be lower than 60% in three years.

**Recommendation 3: Consider adding a writing requirement for applicants, and perhaps using GRE or GMAT scores.**

**Goal: Raise the bar regarding admissions selectivity (without sacrificing diversity).**

There is an understanding among some programs and faculty on campus that MAIS students tend to be weaker than those in disciplinary programs, or that the program provides a fallback for students not accepted into other programs. The MAIS program has at times been willing to take a chance on some students whose academic records might preclude them from other programs (with mixed results), though it has long since stopped admitting students who have done poorly in other OSU graduate programs. At the same time, there is widespread support among committed MAIS faculty that the program serves a diverse body of students very well, and that MAIS students go on from the program to a variety of successful careers.

It is both a necessary goal and an achievable one to raise admissions selectivity without sacrificing diversity, as other OSU programs have done. There is currently no GRE requirement for MAIS admissions, nor is a writing sample beyond the statement of objectives required. Adding these requirements to the MAIS program will make the MAIS admissions requirements more consistent with
many other OSU graduate programs, and they can assist departments and programs in admission selections.

Action Item:
The MAIS will add a requirement that the application include a writing sample and GRE scores. These requirements will be applicable for the admissions cycle to admit students beginning in the fall of 2015.

Metric:
Every term the Graduate School sends a report to the MAIS Director with information regarding students whose grades have fallen below a GPA of 3.0 (either for the term or cumulatively). Almost every term there are 3-5 MAIS students on this list. The success of revising admissions standards will be reflected in a lower number of MAIS students, no more than two per year, whose GPA falls below a 3.0.

Recommendation 4: Continue core MAIS courses and add a third on research methods.
The MAIS program currently requires two courses, totaling 4 credit hours. The review panel recommended that additional attention be paid to research methods and interdisciplinarity in these courses. One of the key goals of these courses is to teach a process of research and writing that will allow students to integrate three fields of study in completing the thesis or project. Adding a new course on research methods, therefore, seems unwarranted, and we recommend against it. (To that end, there is no action item or metric identified.) IST 512 – Applying an Interdisciplinary Perspective, is particularly focused on the research process. The MAIS Director and the core course instructor continually revisit the content of IST 512 to ensure that it meets its goal of grounding students in the process of interdisciplinary research. The addition of new readings, a 1-day workshop with a visiting scholar of interdisciplinary studies, and group work addressing different interdisciplinary approaches to complex problems (e.g., reducing pollution of water resources), all serve to meet this goal. After IST 512 has been completed at the end of each year, the course content will be reevaluated, based on student achievement of learning outcomes. This evaluation will also be a part of the annual assessment of graduate learning outcomes.

Recommendation 5: Add a required research colloquium series for 2nd year students, either in addition to or in lieu of a third required core course.

Goal: Add a required research colloquium.

The MAIS will add a required research colloquium for students, IST 513, in the second year of the program. In this class students will present their research to fellow students, as well as faculty. (The MAIS already holds one or two of these types of sessions a year, but they are voluntary and few in number.) This course will allow students to gain feedback and suggestions on their research and writing,
and will serve as an added resource and support network in the research and writing process. The class will also help to develop a sense of belonging to a cohort among MAIS students, as added meetings throughout the entire degree program can serve in lieu of a physical space to help create a “home” for MAIS students. A colloquium can also serve to broaden program appeal by sharing interdisciplinary research and demonstrating the potential of the program to faculty across campus.

**Action Item:**
The MAIS program will develop IST 513, a required 1-credit research colloquium course for 2nd year MAIS students, and will revise the Graduate Catalog and complete the Category II approval process. Revision of the Graduate Catalog and completion of the Category II process for the new MAIS course will be done no later than the spring of 2015. The new course will be offered, and required of students, starting with those entering the MAIS program during the 2015-16 academic year.

**Metric:**
In order to determine the effectiveness of IST 513, along with the two other core courses, the MAIS program will add 1-2 questions to the Graduate School’s exit survey (if this is feasible), asking students to assess the benefits of these courses on their education. It is expected that at least 75% of the responses will provide a favorable review of these courses.

**Recommendation 6: Develop “tracks” in disciplines that cohorts could take together.**

**Goal:** Develop “tracks” or groups of courses/fields that work well together.

The MAIS currently has its students develop their own programs of study in coordination with their graduate committees. Adding optional tracks in different areas of study can broaden the appeal of the program. It would help to highlight programs and departments that are not commonly used in the MAIS, while providing some additional academic focus and structure for students interested in different tracks. Trends that are emerging in academic research, such as development practice, human-technology interactions, or relations between humans and the built environment, can weave together fields in the social sciences and humanities with fields in the sciences, mathematics, and engineering. There are several ideas for academic concentrations that have been generated in different programs throughout campus, and the MAIS program is becoming involved with some of these programs to explore the development of new MAIS tracks.

One effort recently started with an initiative in the College of Engineering involves creating a track in “Development Practice,” which was explained above in the response to Recommendation 1.
Two additional tracks under consideration involve Music and Technology, which has arisen out of the Music program and faculty in the College of Engineering, and Actuarial Sciences, which arose out of the Colleges of Business and would involve additional areas of study in Applied Economics and Math.

Another effort already proposed by the MAIS was to offer the Peace Corps Master’s International (PCMI) program as a track in the MAIS. The PCMI offers the opportunity to integrate a master’s degree with service abroad. The goal is for students to apply theory to practice while engaging in work overseas related to their academic program. Several programs at OSU in Public Policy, Engineering, Public Health, Water Resources, and Agriculture proposed PCMI degrees as part of their programs. These units all submitted a joint proposal to expand PCMI programs at OSU beyond the current one in the College of Forestry. While several programs at OSU were approved by the Peace Corps to be part of the PCMI program, the MAIS was not approved.

**Action Item:**
The MAIS program will develop three tracks over the next two academic years, in Development Practice, Music and Technology, and Actuarial Sciences. The first of these tracks will be in Development Practice. The MAIS program is currently working with faculty across campus with the long-term objective of developing a Master’s in Development Practice degree. The first step in this process is to develop a track in the MAIS, offering students the option to integrate classes from different departments into three fields of study. This will include the identifying eligible classes from different programs across campus, developing sample programs of study, and creating a page on the MAIS website to communicate all the necessary information to students in one place.

The development of a track in Music and Technology has begun. Faculty and staff in both the Colleges of Liberal Arts and Engineering are engaged in the process. There is enthusiastic support for this track among those who have thus far been part of the conversation. Launching it will follow a similar process to the Development Practice track. There is already one student who has been admitted for fall 2014 to pursue this track, which will be formalized as a track in the 2014-5 academic year.

The Actuarial Sciences track is also in the beginning stages to determine its feasibility. This has been proposed by the College of Business due to the fact that every year, a number of INTO students on a pathway to the MBA are not admitted. These students meet OSU requirements and standards for graduate admissions, but are not considered to be good candidates for the MBA program. An alternative to losing these students, many of whom may want to stay at OSU, is to offer a program of study in the MAIS that will allow students to focus on financial and quantitative skills and knowledge in a focused track in Actuarial Sciences. Initial conversations among the MAIS program, the College of Business and the Graduate School are underway.
The track in Development Practice will be ready by spring term 2015. The track in Music and Technology will be ready by winter term 2015. The Actuarial Sciences track will begin in fall 2015 if it is determined to be feasible.

**Metrics:**
Success will be measured by the number of students pursuing each track. It is expected that within three years of launching each track, each will have the following number of new students per year.

- Development Practice: 3
- Music and Technology: 2
- Actuarial Sciences: 10

**Recommendation 7: Establish one or two admissions cycles instead of continuing rolling admissions.**

**Goal:** Simplify and streamline the admissions process.

The MAIS Director, the review panel, and the graduate advisors of programs participating in the MAIS all agree that the admissions process should be changed. Instead of having rolling admissions, the MAIS will instead establish a single admissions cycle. Applications will be due March 1 of each year, and admissions decisions will be communicated to applicants no later than April 15. (Some exceptions in allowing applicants to be considered outside this schedule may be made on a case-by-case basis as warranted.) A revised explanation of the application process will be posted on the MAIS website.

**Action Item:**
The MAIS program has already implemented this change to the admissions process. The MAIS webpage was updated in November 2013, and all communications with prospective applicants include information about the new application deadlines and processes. The MAIS Director is working with staff in the Graduate School and advisors in participating programs to ensure that all stakeholders fully understand the process that has been adopted. It should be noted that the MAIS program has phased in this change, allowing applications to be submitted for the winter 2014 term, so as not to abruptly change the requirements for applicants who may have been planning to submit applications for the winter 2014 term. Two students were admitted in winter 2014.

**Metric:**
Success will be measured by the response of the programs involved in MAIS admissions. At the end of the 2013-14 academic year, the MAIS Director will send a brief survey to faculty throughout campus involved in the MAIS admissions process. It is expected that 100% of respondents will characterize the new process as an improvement over past practice, and that suggestions for further improving the process will be provided.
**Recommendation 8: Require the same number of credits in each area of study.**

**Goal:** Revise requirements for the program of study to better promote interdisciplinarity.

Currently, the MAIS program requires at least 49 credits, with a minimum of 9 credits in each field of study and a maximum of 21 credits (the major field usually includes all or most thesis and project credits, which makes the total in that field higher than the others). The panel recommended making a change so that an equal number of credits are required in each field of study. While full equality among fields may not be attainable or desirable (due to varying course credits associated with particular classes, along with student needs and interests), raising the minimum from 9 to 12 credits would help to achieve the goal.

**Action Item:**
The MAIS Director will submit a Category II proposal to raise the minimum number of credits in each field of study from 9 to 12. Upon approval, the Graduate Catalog and the MAIS website will be revised to reflect the new requirement. This change will be made during the 2014-15 academic year, and will be applicable to all students entering fall term 2015 and after.

**Metric:**
The MAIS assessment form asks major advisors to report on how well their students integrated three fields of study in their theses or projects. This is completed at the final defense. In 2011-2 and 2012-3, respectively, the MAIS program reported that 47% and 60% of MAIS graduates were found to have done an excellent job at integrating their three fields; 47% and 33% were found to be “good,” and 6% and 7% were found to be weak in achieving this learning outcome.

A successful outcome will result in more than 75% of MAIS graduates being given a rating of “excellent” with respect to integration of three fields of study, and none being given a rating of “weak.”

**Recommendation 9: Consider requiring an appendix to every thesis or project that provides an account of how interdisciplinary scholarship was achieved.**

**Goal:** Revise requirements for the thesis and project to better promote interdisciplinarity.

As noted above under Recommendation 4, one of the key goals of the MAIS core courses is to teach a process of research and writing that will allow students to integrate three fields of study in completing the thesis or project. The panel’s recommendation to add an appendix to each thesis and project explaining how the student achieved interdisciplinary scholarship will provide an excellent complement to the coursework. Requiring this appendix as a coda to the thesis/project (and in effect to students’ completion of the MAIS program), will help to ensure that an interdisciplinary process is followed and
reflected upon throughout the students’ research and writing. This will help to strengthen the program and enhance the work of the students.

Action Item:
The MAIS Director will seek approval from the Graduate School to add this requirement to the thesis and project, and will inform all MAIS students and graduate faculty of the requirement. The MAIS website will be revised to reflect this change. This requirement will be added to the MAIS curriculum, and will applicable for all students entering in the fall of 2015.

Metric:
Success will measured with the MAIS assessment form, which will result in more than 75% of MAIS graduates being given a rating of “excellent” with respect to integration of three fields of study, and none being given a rating of “weak.”

Recommendation 10: Develop a handbook for MAIS faculty and advisors.

Goal: Develop a handbook for MAIS faculty and advisors to improve awareness and understanding of program goals and requirements.

Historically many departments, programs, and/or faculty have interacted with MAIS students on an infrequent basis. This sometimes has led to confusion among all parties about process, standards, and requirements of the MAIS program. This can result in inconsist experiences, dissatisfaction, or mistakes that have to be corrected at a later date. To diminish such confusion, the MAIS program will develop a handbook for faculty and advisors so they can 1) better understand and communicate their roles and responsibilities; and 2) maintain a clear understanding about program goals, rules and procedures; and 3) have a readily available resource for answering questions they may have.

Action Item:
The MAIS program will develop a handbook for faculty and advisors. It will posted on the MAIS website (as a webpage and a printable PDF), and be ready for use starting in the fall of 2015.

Metric:
Measuring the success of the availability of a handbook will determined by means of website analysis. This will involve working with IT staff in the Graduate School to develop a system to track the number of hits and downloads. It is unclear at this time how feasible this is, or what metrics would be both available and appropriate to use.
**Recommendation 11:** Provide a “home” for MAIS students either in the form of a physical space or continuation of IST courses into the 2nd year.

Providing a home for MAIS students in the form of physical space could potentially offer a benefit to the MAIS program and its students. However, this seems not to be feasible due to limitations involving the MAIS budget and finding a suitable space, which would have to be maintained. An alternative “home” will instead come in the form of continuing MAIS coursework into the 2nd year, allowing students to stay connected to their fellow MAIS students and core MAIS faculty. This is addressed in the response to Recommendation 5.

**Recommendation 12:** Track information on students in a way that is accessible to departments and faculty.

**Goal:** Improve information management and accessibility.

The MAIS program needs to better collect and disseminate program information, particularly the tracking of student progress. The staffing changes described under Recommendation 1 will help to meet this objective, enabling the program to systematize management of information about students (e.g., fields of study, enrollment status) and the program in general (e.g., number of graduates each year, distribution of fields of study across colleges) so that information is readily available to not only the MAIS Director, but to faculty advisors as well.

**Action Item:**

The MAIS Director will work with support staff to develop a plan for acquiring and distributing information about MAIS students, and the program in general, on a regular basis. The Director will consult with MAIS faculty and the Graduate School to receive recommendations about the type of data that needs to be compiled, the frequency with which it should be compiled and distributed, and who should receive it (or have access to it, depending upon the process used). A detailed plan for the collection and distribution of MAIS student and program information will be developed in the summer of 2014, and its implementation will begin in the fall of 2014.

**Metric:**

The MAIS program is currently working with the Graduate Education Toolkit (GET) project as part of the effort to develop a stronger system for collecting, tracking and evaluating information about graduate students. We expect to benefit from greater accessibility, transparency and clarity in the collection and communication of student data, and will work with the GET project coordinators to develop specific metrics in order to determine the effectiveness of the new system.
**Action Plan Schedule**

All of the action items described above will be completed on the following schedule.

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<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Action Items</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2013</td>
<td>Change admissions process to once-a-year</td>
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<td>Make necessary changes to website to reflect new admissions process</td>
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<td>Spring 2014</td>
<td>Complete admissions process for students entering fall 2014</td>
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<td>Summer 2014</td>
<td>Submit Category II for IST 513</td>
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<td>Submit Category II for minimum credit requirement</td>
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<td>Fall 2014</td>
<td>Hire MAIS support staff (.25 FTE)</td>
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<td>Complete two student success stories</td>
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<td>Complete MAIS fact sheet</td>
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<td>Winter 2015</td>
<td>Change Graduate Catalog regarding minimum credit requirement</td>
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<td>Change Graduate Catalog regarding IST 513 requirement</td>
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<td>Implement new admissions requirements – GRE scores and writing sample</td>
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<td>Post MAIS Student Research page and list of theses</td>
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<td>Begin offering Music and Technology track</td>
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<td>Spring 2015</td>
<td>Begin offering Development Practice track</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Complete one student success story</td>
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<td>Fall 2015</td>
<td>Post faculty handbook</td>
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<td>Begin offering IST 513</td>
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<td>Begin requirement of adding an appendix to thesis and project</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Begin offering Actuarial Sciences track</td>
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**A Note on Program Finances**

The review panel suggested the possible need for additional financial support, for stronger administration, program staffing, creation and maintenance of new tracks, and GRA/GTA positions. This is, of course, a common theme regarding academic programs, as they can almost always expand/improve/do more, and additional funding helps to achieve such aims. At the same time, such support is not always available, and programs often need to rely on additional funding streams to either maintain or expand services.

With respect to the MAIS, it is not a costly program, with a budget of about $45,000 annually, while graduating about 20 students per year. As the self-study revealed, these students tend to see great value in their education, and they have gone on to diverse and productive careers. Still, the MAIS can be more entrepreneurial.
We see three potential sources of securing additional funding at this time.

1. INTO
2. E-campus
3. Donations from alumni

INTO
The MAIS Director has explored the possibility of working with INTO in the past, though no action was pursued at the time. The MAIS admissions process, which requires approval from multiple departments, has been considered too slow and cumbersome for INTO, which wanted decisions to be communicated within one week of receipt of applications. It is possible that the development of a track in Actuarial Sciences can offer the MAIS an opportunity to now work with INTO. An admissions process can be developed that meets the needs of INTO and its students. In addition, a funding model can be developed that would allow resources to be directed toward the participating units (Business, Applied Economics, Mathematics), and the MAIS program.

E-CAMPUS
Pursuit of a new funding stream via e-campus has become a common practice across OSU. For the MAIS, this option seems unattractive. The MAIS offers only two (and soon three) courses, while all other student credit hours come from departments and programs across campus. It would be inappropriate to offer these required courses through e-campus, since the MAIS is not an online degree, and the courses require students to be present on campus. Nor does it seem feasible to suggest revenue sharing with departments benefitting financially from MAIS students enrolled in their e-campus courses. This would serve as a disincentive to participation in the MAIS program at a time when it is seeking wider participation.

DONATIONS
Lastly, there is a possibility of soliciting donations from MAIS alumni. The OSU Foundation has been working successfully with colleges and programs across campus for many years to develop new sources of financial support. The MAIS should be no different from these other programs. The MAIS Director will initiate a process for engaging the OSU Foundation (this will start with a conversation with the Dean of the Graduate School), so that the MAIS program can begin to emulate the fundraising success that many other programs at OSU have already achieved.