SPECIAL REPORT

OF THE

GRADUATE COUNCIL

concerning

REVISION TO THE
ACCELERATED MASTERS PROGRAM:
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE AND REGIONAL PLANNING
(#5255)

Presented at the
784th Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate
February 14, 2019

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

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The Graduate Council recommends approval of this proposal.

Briefly describe the Proposal

When the Department of LARP created the 4 + 1 accelerated BSED (later BSSCD)/MRP degree program in 2014-2015, it was among the first accelerated master’s programs at UMass, and thus graduated some of the first accelerated master’s students. At that time, our accelerated program included only majors in our department. However, subsequent accelerated master’s programs at UMass have also included bachelor’s degree students from other programs at UMass and in the Five College Consortium. We would like to expand our existing accelerated program to allow the same accommodation of students from complementary pre-planning fields, e.g., Sustainable Community Development as a minor, BSLA, BDIC students with sustainability concentrations, Geography, Landscape Studies, Environmental Studies, Public Policy, etc. These
students could seek admission to the accelerated program with approval of the MRP graduate program director.

*Provide a brief overview of the process for developing the proposal*

A number of Bachelor’s degree programs, even though not professionally-oriented degrees, offer concentrations or sub-fields complementary to planning. Combining the undergraduate degree in one of these planning-related programs with the core coursework of the existing two-year Master of Regional Planning degree will help prepare students for the profession of planning in a total of five years by reducing duplicative coursework. Among the eligible students beyond our current BSSCD majors would be SCD minors, BDIC students who pursue sustainability concentrations, Bachelor’s students in Geography, Environmental Studies, Landscape Studies, etc. in the Five-College Consortium, with approval of the MRP graduate program director. This expansion will only serve to make our accelerated 4 + 1 program comparable to other such UMass programs. The LARP department faculty voted unanimously in support of this proposal in fall 2017.

**Purpose and Goals**

*Describe the proposal's purpose and the particular knowledge and skills to be acquired and provide a rationale for creating this accelerated degree program.*

Because of recent educational and institutional trends, an undergraduate degree in a planning-related field is increasingly not sufficient for long-term professional development in the field of city and regional planning. Almost every year, students with undergraduate planning degrees from Westfield State University apply to MRP programs (at UMass or elsewhere) for further graduate-level professional training toward an accredited degree. Before the 4 + 1, similarly, a number of our BSSCD majors at UMass also considered graduate study in the planning field; in recent years, based on the success of our 4 + 1 program, students in other interdisciplinary fields such as BDIC, Geography, Environmental Studies, etc. have also expressed interest in graduate study in the planning field. We wish to take this emerging trend to the next step of encouraging students to think in advance about undergraduate preparation for graduate study (e.g., through internships or practica) and to continue their studies at UMass rather than matriculate elsewhere.

**Accelerated Masters Information**

*Does the accelerated master's option apply to all master's degrees in this field, or only to certain tracks or concentrations?*

The accelerated MRP program applies to all concentration areas in the degree program.

*What type of degree program does this accelerated master's option pertain to?*

*Note: second and third require separate approval.*

Not Answered

**Comments:** All complementary planning-related undergraduate Bachelor's program would be eligible subject to the approval of the MRP graduate program director. The accelerated 4+1
related to the MRP program, comparable to the existing BSSC/MRP 4 + 1 accelerated program that was already approved in 2015; we wish to expand the program to include similar program majors in the Five College Consortium.

Describe the projected course sequence for this degree and the timeline to completion for students.

Please see proposal document; students would identify and interest in the program during their junior year for curricular advising, would take graduate RP coursework in their senior year, and apply for the MRP program in February of their senior year.

What undergraduate degree program is this accelerated masters associated with, if any.

Currently associated with the BSSCD major, would include potential related majors such as BSLA, BDIC< Bachelor's degree in Geography, Environmental Studies, Landscape Studies, etc. within the Five College Consortium.

If this proposal requires no additional resources, say so and briefly explain why. If this proposal requires additional resources, explain how they will be paid for. For proposals involving instruction, indicate how many new enrollments are expected and whether the courses have room to accommodate them.

No additional resources required.

Provide the curriculum to the applicable Master’s degree as it currently appears in the Graduate Bulletin and explain how this curriculum will be scheduled over the student's undergraduate and graduate careers. Note that total number of credits must be 30 plus the minimum number required for undergraduate degree (generally 120, making total number of credits required 150).

Note: For Master's programs under 36 credits, a maximum of 9 graduate-level credits taken as an undergraduate may be applied to both degrees. For Master's programs over 36 credits, a maximum of 12 graduate-level credits taken as an undergraduate may be applied to both degrees.

120 undergraduate credits, 12 credits taken in undergraduate program applied to graduate program as well, 36 graduate credits for the MRP program, similar to existing BSSCD/MRP accelerated program.

Who can apply to pursue this accelerated Master’s degree? (UMass students, Five College Students, Students in specific degree programs, etc.)

Please see above; all Five College students, subject to approval of MRP graduate program director.

Are there any admissions exceptions to this degree program, such as a waiver of the GRE requirements?

No.
Comments: GRE required for graduate study in MRP program; waivers granted in exceptional circumstances with comparable credentials for graduate study.

MOTION: That the Faculty Senate approve the Revision to the Accelerated Master’s Program: Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 19-039.