

Continuous Improvement Input (From the minutes of the 12/09/16 meeting):

- Question asked on self-sustainability.
- Clarify impact of relationship between and benefits of graduate students teaching the math 94 and 95. Provide information in the next self-study.

Dean Review Input:

The MS Mathematics enrolled 51 new students from Fall 2011 to Fall 2016, and averages 30 continuing students in the program. A total of 40 degrees have been awarded since Fall 2011. Over the years, we have discussed strategies for increasing enrollment, but the application numbers seem to have plateaued. The University should consider whether or not the MS Mathematics program is well suited as a special session (self-supporting) degree. Given the role that the MS Mathematics plays in providing Mathematics instructors for the University, a move of the program to stateside might be appropriate. If the program is kept in Extended University, the alternative would be to try raising student fees and hope that the impact on student enrollment isn't too extremely negative. It is feared that a reduction in marketing costs would negatively impact enrollment more than a fee increase.

Provost Response and Comments Related to the 2016 Mathematics Master Program Review

In the review and report the external reviewers identified areas of strength and accomplishment within the Master of Science in Mathematics program. At the same time, the review was helpful in identifying significant questions about the structure and function of the program.

The review noted that many graduate students have published their thesis results in peer-reviewed journals and presented at conferences. Reviewers noted that students reported a friendly and supportive atmosphere. Instruction in the program was observed to be of high quality.

Within the program, reviewers suggested changes to improve student options and increase pedagogical effectiveness including eliminating most one-day-a-week sections. The review also recommended changes to the culminating experience that might include adding a qualifying GPA for thesis work, and offering a comprehensive examination option with a view to improving rates of degree completion by MS students. The program should take steps to improve advising and ensure that faculty are aware of compensation for thesis supervision.

As with the undergraduate program, the MS program must develop and implement a comprehensive program to assess achievement of student outcomes.

Mathematics also needs to engage in a serious discussion about how to make the Master's program viable and financially sustainable. This needs to include an examination of how to recruit a viable cohort of students on an ongoing basis. This could include considering changes in the model (self vs state support), offering a clearer focus to the degree program, seeking input from community or alumni.

The MS program is offered on a self-support basis but is not currently self-supporting. As a consequence, I will request that the budget office cease revenue distributions for the MS in Math program until I receive and approve a plan that articulates how the program will become self-supporting or how the program might be modified to meet student needs while being financially sustainable into the future.