Memo from the ITOM Department Chair

Re: Management Information Systems (MIS) Major changes.

One of the fastest changing fields in our society is the Information Technology (IT). IT is a major change agent that affects every single aspect of our lives, opens new opportunities, forces organizations to change and respond to keep competitive advantage. Newer and newer technologies are coming out that create new career paths and redefine processes, businesses, and not last and least, academic programs that teach IT disciplines.

The MIS major that is in place right now at FAU was designed to provide students with the classical training is usually referred to as “The basic four” – programming, databases, data communications, and system analysis and design. Graduates emerge as “the” system integrators needed in corporations to run and manage business processes smoothly. They have heavy technical skills trained to integrate systems and processes, work with databases and code programs in C++, Java and other languages, skilled in web programming.

The current business environment has needs for so many more and diverse skills than the basic four. In fact, the current IT consults hired by Fortune 500 companies, such as Deloitte Consulting, McKinsey & Company and many others, do not even have programming or database technical skills.

MIS programs across the nations responded to these changes and opened the access of their programs to more students with wider variety of skills. For example, Fox School of Business at Temple University referred to this situation as “Tired” vs. “Wired” (see the image below). At ITOM our goal is to align our programs with the dynamics of the 21st century, and provide training for many more opportunities for the business professional careers, such as Digital Media analyst, Social network developer and analyst, Business analyst, Information Service Manager, Supply Chain Manager, Knowledge Manager, Digital Product and service developer, Change Manager, and many others. To train for these opportunities, we need to open the restrictiveness of the current program that mandates the basic four classes as MIS core classes. Additionally, we need to give the opportunity for the MIS students to take electives from other departments to broaden their perspectives, thus decreasing the major credits from 21 to 18. To guide the prospective students, we suggest possible career paths in the catalog description of the major.
(After Fox Scholl of Business, Temple University)