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OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR AND PROVOST

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May 26, 2023

Chancellor Juan Sánchez Muñoz
Chancellor's Office

RE: PROPOSAL FOR AN UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM LEADING TO A BACHELOR OF ARTS (B.A.) DEGREE IN DATA SCIENCE AND ANALYTICS

Dear Chancellor:

With this memo I recommend for your approval the attached *Proposal for an Undergraduate Program Leading to a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Degree in Data Science and Analytics* (DSA) effective fall semester 2024. My recommendation follows the proposal's endorsement by the Academic Senate and the Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education (attached).

The proposed DSA major, which will develop skills in data science and analytics methods that are fundamental to data-driven communication, inference and decision-making in the political, economic, behavioral and management sciences, represents an important addition to UC Merced's portfolio of undergraduate programs. In terms of resources, the proposed program capitalizes on existing curriculum and faculty expertise. Only four new courses are needed to implement the program, including a year-long (two-semester) capstone, and no new faculty for at least the first five years of the program. No other significant resources have been identified as necessary to deliver the program.

As you know, the proposed DSA program is one of two data science -related programs being proposed concurrently by the faculty. (The second is the Data Science and Computing (DSC) B.S. degree.) The two programs provide pathways to related but different sets of expertise that are of interest to prospective students and are in strong demand in the job market. Together, these two degrees are projected to enroll between 300 and 800 students at steady state, making them important contributors to UC Merced's enrollment goals. Both programs are also expected to alleviate pressure on the Computer Science and Engineering major by providing an attractive alternative to a CSE degree as well as pathways to degree completion for students who determine that a degree in Computer Science and Engineering is not for them.

Given the similarity in names of the DSA and DSC degrees, and because prospective students may not fully appreciate the differences between the two programs at the time of application, reviewers have noted, and I agree, that it will be important to ensure programs are clearly differentiated in marketing materials and that students can move easily between the two programs. To help prospective students identify the degree that best matches their interests, the DSA and DSC faculty plan to collaboratively develop marketing materials and market the programs together. The faculty will also establish clear pathways for students to change majors from one program to the other.

In conclusion, I am delighted to recommend to you this addition to the campus' portfolio of undergraduate educational programming. I thank the DSA proponents for a well-developed and comprehensive proposal and the Senate for conducting a thorough campus review. I encourage the DSA faculty to give the enclosed feedback careful consideration as they work to realize the promise of the proposed program.

Sincerely,

Gregg Camfield
Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost

I concur with the Executive Vice Chancellor/Provost's recommendation.

Juan Sánchez Muñoz
Chancellor

CC: Michael Richards, Chief of Staff to the Executive Vice Chancellor/Provost
        Fatima Paul, Executive Director, Academic Senate