Memorandum

To: University Senate Steering Committee

From: Tamara Machmut-Jhashi, Chair
        Senate Budget Review Committee (SBRC)

Re: Proposal for the Bachelor of Science Program in Information Technology

Date: 22 November 2004

The Senate Budget Review Committee (SBRC) has voted to endorse the proposal for the Bachelor of Science Program in Informational Technology (revised version 28 October 2004). Although implementing any new program in an economic climate such as we currently face in Michigan requires careful consideration, the SBRC believes that the new program in Information Technology can be established on a solid footing in its first three years with modest resources, and that the evidence suggests it should grow into a self-supporting program in the near future.

On 24 September 2004 the SBRC met to discuss the program proposal.   The following concerns were them most significant:
- Clarification was requested regarding the proposed revenues from the new major; specifically, whether the numbers in the *proforma* reflected only incremental growth (new students) or included current students changing majors.
- Significant concern was expressed on the impact the new IT major would have on the current MIS program. Data in the proposal indicated that enrollment in MIS would dip substantially, and the committee's concern was that cannibalization of students from that program would pose real difficulties for MIS.
- Questions were posed regarding whether current faculty had the expertise to teach some of the courses outlined in the proposal.
- More information was requested regarding the future demand for IT specialists, particularly in light of the proliferation of technical jobs going abroad.

Dr. Sethi responded to the committee's questions promptly in a memo (04-10-04) and in a meeting with the SBRC on 8 October 2004. At the meeting, Dr. Sethi presented useful information on the current and future needs of the business community, drawing upon U.S. Department of Commerce reports on the projected growth of IT jobs in coming years. Dr. Sethi responded thoughtfully to each issue raised and agreed to submit to the committee three variations of proposed budgets: worst-case (anticipating declining enrollments in CIS/MIS and modest growth of IT), best-case, and likely scenarios. Calculations regarding incremental growth (IT majors only) needed to be clearly identified. The following list summarizes the issues put forth by the committee as a result of Dr. Sethi's presentation:

- Emphasis that projections for 15 new students represent incremental growth
- In the context of declining enrollments in CIS and projected long-term market demands for IT specialists, the IT program would offer the potential for substantial new growth in the department.
- Flexibility within the current faculty to teach both new IT courses and courses modified for IT requirements

- The first two years of the new program are virtually 'costless' since those courses are already being offered for CIS majors. After the initial two years of the program, the department would be better able to assess the future of the major and its budgetary requests.
- Projecting three potential budgets: worse-case, best-case, and likely.

The SBRC voted to approve the program after consideration of the revised proposal and the three budget scenarios received from Dr. Sethi on 28 October 2004. The committee endorses the program with the following provisos:

- A paragraph added in the proposal describing briefly the assumptions in the worst and best cases.
- That the budget be adjusted to reflect a reduced rate of tuition increase. As it is presently written, the budget takes into account a 5% hike in annual tuition, which is not a reasonable expectation at the current time. (A 3% increase is perhaps more in line with foreseeable circumstances)
- That course fees indicate a current rate of 13.50 rather than 13.00 as stated.
- Adjustment for expense of faculty in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics to teach APM163.