



## **PCC Proposal to Rename the College of Information Studies to the College of Information (Senate Document #23-24-29)**

**PRESENTED BY** Wendy Stickle, Chair, Senate Programs, Curricula, and Courses Committee

**REVIEW DATES** SEC – March 15, 2024 | SENATE – April 3, 2024

**VOTING METHOD** In a single vote

**RELEVANT  
POLICY/DOCUMENT**

**NECESSARY  
APPROVALS** Senate and President

### **ISSUE**

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The College of Information Studies proposes to change its name from the College of Information Studies to the College of Information. The college wishes to do so because they believe the name “Information Studies” no longer accurately represents the College. Since the College was renamed from the College of Library and Information Services to the College of Information Studies in 2001, there has been huge growth in the mission, research, educational programs and size of the College. For many years, the name Information Studies fit the college's research and education interests, but "studies" now fails to capture the rich set of education and research activities of the College, particularly the college's applied, practice-centered activities. Over the last decade, the College has addressed issues such as technology and policy for digital accessibility, sociotechnical design for providing privacy, co-design of information technology for specific populations including children and older adults, protecting people from mis- and disinformation, and the ethical application of artificial intelligence and machine learning by both the private and public sectors.

Adopting this name would also align the College with the other 53 iSchools in North America, among which “Information” is the most commonly used name. The College has socialized the name change with alumni, faculty, staff, students, College Advisory Board, UMD Senior Administration, Deans at UMD, and the UMD Office of Marketing and Communications; the proposal for the name change was met with strong support.

The proposal was approved by the Senate Programs, Curricula, and Courses committee on March 1, 2024.

### **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

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The Senate Committee on Programs, Curricula, and Courses recommends that the Senate approve this name change.

### **COMMITTEE WORK**

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The committee considered this proposal at its meeting on March 1, 2024. Keith Marzullo, Dean of the College of Information Studies, presented the proposal and answered questions from the committee. The committee approved the proposal.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

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The Senate could decline to approve this new college name.

## **RISKS**

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If the Senate declines to approve this college name change, the current name will continue to be an inadequate description of the College's programs, research, and activities.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

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There will be costs associated with updating marketing and communication materials, but there are no significant financial implications for college name changes.

**University of Maryland  
PCC Proposal**

*PCC Log No:* 23090

**Program:** n/a

**Department/Unit:** n/a

**College/School:** College of Information Studies

**Proposal Contact Person (with email):** Keith Marzullo, Dean, [marzullo@umd.edu](mailto:marzullo@umd.edu)

**Type of Action (check one):**


Change to Unit, Department, or College  
 Other:


**Effective Term:** Summer 2024

**Approval Signatures** *Please print name, sign, and date. For proposals requiring multiple unit approvals, please use additional cover sheet(s). Digital signatures may be used.*

1. Department Committee Chair: n/a

2. Department Chair: n/a

3. College/School PCC Chair: Kate Izsak, 2/1/2024 

4. Dean: Keith Marzullo, 2/1/2024 

5. Dean of the Graduate School (if required): n/a

6. Chair, Senate PCC:

7. University Senate Chair (if required):

8. Senior Vice President and Provost:

**Summary of Proposed Action (use additional sheet if necessary):**

The College of Information Studies (INFO) at the University of Maryland (UMD) College Park proposes changing its name to the College of Information, effective June 1, 2024, to better communicate its mission and scope, reduce confusion, and bring the college in line with the nomenclature in the information studies/sciences field.

**Instructions:** When approved by the dean of the college or school, please email the proposal to [pcc-submissions@umd.edu](mailto:pcc-submissions@umd.edu).

**Unit Code(s) (to be entered by the Office of Academic Planning and Programs):**

# UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND COLLEGE PARK

## Proposal to Rename the **College of Information Studies** to the **College of Information**

*January 2024*

The College of Information Studies (INFO) at the University of Maryland (UMD) College Park proposes changing its name to the College of Information, effective June 1, 2024, to better communicate its mission and scope, reduce confusion, and bring the college in line with the nomenclature in the information studies/sciences field.

### **I. INFO’s name change request is aligned with the shifts in the college’s focus and scope**

**INFO was founded in 1965 as the UMD School of Library and Information Services**—in response to demand for library science education in the DC/MD/VA area, which lacked a library school in a public university. From the start, INFO offered the Master’s Degree in Library Science and within 3 years added the PhD. Research in the college included the use of technology in accessing information and in library services. In 1973, it was renamed the College of Library and Information Services.

In the 1990s, library schools, including the INFO College, began to expand their areas of research and education in response to the rapidly advancing information age. More and more information was being produced and being disseminated from ever-increasing sources. INFO was expanding into data science and policy, digital literacy, and how the new world of information and technology could be leveraged to benefit individuals and social challenges.

**In 2001, to reflect this evolution in its scope of academics and research, INFO was renamed the College of Information Studies.** Dropping “libraries” and replacing “services” with “studies” was deliberate, and reflected both the broader scope of its research while still respecting its impact on practice and policy in libraries.

In 2003, our college launched the Master of Information Management program, and in 2005, we joined the growing iSchool Caucus (now an international organization of over 120 Information Schools). In 2011, the Master of Human-Computer Interaction program was launched. We were emerging as a leader in research and education in data science and human-computer interaction.

**2015 (approx.) marks another turning point in the evolution of the information age—a heightened focus on topics such as AI, information gathering and use by the public and private sectors, social media, and privacy—resulting in a college that today in 2024 has greatly expanded its mission and scope since its renaming in 2001.**

Over the last decade, the INFO College has increasingly addressed issues such as technology and policy for digital accessibility, sociotechnical design for providing privacy, co-design of information technology for specific populations including children and older adults, protecting people from mis- and disinformation, and the ethical application of artificial intelligence and machine learning by both the private and public sectors. We have grown to having over 60 faculty members who have PhDs in a wide set of fields including anthropology, biomedical and health informatics, cognitive science, communications, computer science, electrical engineering, English literature, information science, mathematics education, public policy, social psychology, and organizational psychology.

Today, INFO is a recognized leader in R&D around accessible technology, data visualization, human-computer interaction, social media, informal education, information justice/ethics, machine learning and AI, sociotechnical cybersecurity, and team science. Additionally, we continue to be a leader in the traditional core of libraries, archives and museums (e.g., our MLIS program has risen from #10 in 2013 to #4 in the latest *US News & World Report* college rankings).

Also over the last decade, this expanding world of information and its applications has driven rapid growth in career opportunities. To keep up with the demand, INFO launched nine new academic degree programs and pathways:

- B.S. in Information Science at College Park (2016)
- B.S. in Information Science at Shady Grove (2018)
- Dual Master Degree in Information Management and Community Planning (2019 in partnership with the UMD School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation)
- Dual B.S. in Information Science and MLIS (2021)
- Master of Professional Studies in Game, Entertainment, and Media Analytics (2021)
- Dual B.S. in Information Science and MIM (2022)
- Master of Professional Studies in Data Journalism (2022 in partnership with the UMD Philip Merrill College of Journalism)
- B.A. in Technology and Information Design (2022)
- B.S. in Social Data Science (2022 in partnership with the UMD College of Behavioral and Social Sciences and UMD School of Public Health)

From 2015 to 2023, INFO's student body grew by over 500%, from 450 students to 2500, with the undergraduate Information Science program becoming the second largest undergraduate program at UMD as of Fall 2023. The skills that INFO's graduates are learning continue to grow in tandem with the growing impact of information being everywhere—smart cities, social media, data journalism, gaming, technology design, AI, etc.—and the pace is not slowing down.

Adopting the name “College of Information Studies” 22 years ago made sense given our research and education at that time, but “studies” now fails to capture the rich set of education and research activities of INFO—particularly the college's applied, practice-centered activities. Rather than

retaining “studies” and adding more qualifiers including “science”, “technology”, and “engineering”, we wish to use a name that reflects our broad focus: the “College of Information.” Recent research (2023) with INFO alumni supports this point, showing a great variety of preferences for naming conventions that include science, sciences, studies, engineering, library studies, services, and more. “College of Information” would encompass the diversity of INFO alumni specializations.

Fellow iSchools have recognized this as well: the most popular nomenclature today being, simply, Information. As of 2023, there are 53 colleges and departments in North America that call themselves iSchools. These units have assumed the following titles, which reflect the growing trend towards just “information” to reflect our broad focus on sciences, technologies, and studies.

Name Convention	Count	%
Information	26	49%
Information Science	10	19%
Information Sciences	8	15%
Information Studies	6	11%
Other	3	6%
	53	100%

**II. University Support for “College of Information”: UMD Office of Marketing & Communications; INFO Faculty & Staff**

The INFO College engaged the UMD Office of Marketing and Communications (OMC) in the summer of 2023 for guidance and recommendations on branding. After conducting independent industry research, coupled with holding a workshop on August 18, 2023 with INFO faculty, staff, alumni, students, and board members, the OMC recommended the new name, College of Information. The OMC cites the pro that this is inclusive of all information studies, sciences, and degrees, and aligns with industry/academy trends for information colleges in higher education.

Additionally, the INFO College surveyed INFO faculty and staff in Oct 2023 and found that they are supportive of the name change to College of Information. (54% approval rate of this new name, higher than any other naming convention proposed.)

**III. INFO College Request: Rename to the “College of Information”**

Based on the assessment of the INFO College’s growing scope of research and academics, changing nomenclature in the information studies/sciences field, and stakeholder research, as well as advice from alumni, board members, deans, and the UMD Office of Marketing & Communications—the INFO College is proposing the name change to “College of Information,” effective June 1, 2024.

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