

**Academic Programs Committee resolution on the
MS in Business, Climate, and
Sustainability (MSBCS) Joint Degree program**

I. Introduction

Subcommittee B of the Academic Programs Committee reviewed materials provided by Nicholas School of the Environment (NSOE) and Fuqua School of Business (Fuqua) for a new proposal for a MS in Business, Climate, and Sustainability (MSBCS). Representing the units were: Lori Benneer, Stanback Dean NSOE; Timothy Johnson, Senior Associate Dean for Academic Initiatives, NSOE; and Russ Morgan, Senior Associate Dean for Full-time Programs, Fuqua.

APC was provided with a MSBCS degree proposal report (10/17/24), MAC response to the MSBCS report, and as optional reading, an earlier version of the MSBCS proposal (9/24/24).

Summary of APC discussion:

- a. The committee discussed the program strengths including the strong collaboration across Fuqua and NSOE.
- b. Concerns were raised about faculty buy-in, with much discussion of the vote counts from the two schools. Follow-up information revealed the following: NSOE: 31 of 36 voted yes; Fuqua: 55 of 79 voted yes.
- c. Discussion about the combining of two 2-year degrees into a 10-month program, which may lead to dilution of topical and subject matter expertise by students.
- d. Concern raised, as outlined in the MAC report, about the use of “Master of Science” in the name of the degree.
- e. Concern raised about finances, including assumption of 3 years of provost waived allocated costs.
- f. Discussion of use of Fuqua services (75% Fuqua v. 25% NSOE) to support and finance program start up supports (recruitment, admissions, coordination costs), and addition of new staff.
- g. Concern about space usage, given that Fuqua has space flexibility and NSOE does not.
- h. Concern raised about available affordable housing for students in Durham.
- i. Discussion of student diversity and available student supports.

III. Resolution

Despite the concerns mentioned above, APC was generally positive about the anticipated benefits of this proposed master's program for prospective students, the community, and planet.

The committee recommends moving forward with the program with the following provisions:

1. The degree should be named "Master of Business, Climate and Sustainability" or some other title **without** "Master of Science" in the name.
2. If the costs (financial, space, institutional, faculty effort, student resources) become notably higher than anticipated or otherwise problematic once the program begins, the program administrators and leadership of the two schools should be ready to pivot quickly, and potentially even consider sunseting the program. Because this is a 10-month program, sunseting could occur relatively quickly.
3. The program administrators consider the other potential challenges noted above.

IV. Vote

Attendees voted unanimously in favor of this resolution (10 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain).