

MEMORANDUM

TO: David Chapman, Dean of Graduate School

FROM: JoAnn P. Fenn and Joseph A. Knight, Department of Pathology

SUBJECT: Request for name change for Master of Science program in Medical Laboratory Science

DATE: October 25, 2002

Request:

Name for Master of Science Program in Medical Laboratory Science be changed to Master of Science Program in Laboratory Medicine and Biomedical Science.

Rationale for name change:

Our students come from two different backgrounds – those with B.S. degrees in medical laboratory science (MLS) or medical technology and those with B.S. degrees in biology, chemistry, and microbiology. The B.S. degree in MLS is very specific and qualifies students to sit for a national certification examination, which allows them to work in a clinical or hospital laboratory. They are trained in the areas of medical microbiology, hematology, clinical chemistry, immunology, immuno-hematology, etc. This is often referred to as “laboratory medicine”. A masters degree provides opportunities in the clinical laboratory in areas of management, molecular diagnostics, research and development, and quality assurance, as well as employment in industry with biomedical companies. However, the name “Medical Laboratory Science” is vague to prospective students unfamiliar with the profession.

Students with B.S. degrees in biology, chemistry, or microbiology enter this masters program because of interest in biomedical research. Since the program is located in the School of Medicine, these students have the opportunity to work with nationally recognized faculty in pathology and laboratory medicine, Huntsman Cancer Institute, genetics, pediatrics, OBGYN, etc. The biomedical/basic science researchers in the Department of Pathology have expressed concern about the shortage of master of science level graduates to hire

as research assistants. The name change to “Laboratory Medicine and Biomedical Science” gives a clearer description of the focus of research endeavors and should attract more students with these backgrounds and interests.

Practice elsewhere:

The Directory of Graduate Programs for Clinical Laboratory Practitioners shows that most program names are “Medical Technology”, “Clinical Laboratory Science”, “Medical Laboratory Science”. However, 25% of these programs do not require research and another 17% allow the student to choose between a research route or no research. Also, 56% do not admit students who are not certified as a medical laboratory scientist/medical technologist.

The thesis research is an integral part of our Master of Science degree for both groups of students. The opportunities to engage in basic science and more applied clinical research in laboratory medicine and biomedical science are extraordinary.

Name of degree:

Currently, students graduate with a M.S. in Medical Laboratory Science. We propose this be changed as well, so the diploma will reflect “Laboratory Medicine and Biomedical Science”.

Changes in catalog prefixes, course designations:

Currently the courses are listed under Pathology. We propose that this remain since there would be no changes in course titles and their catalog listings.

Our goal is to attract excellent, motivated students into this graduate program who are interested in how disease occurs, diagnosis of disease, cell biology and immunology, molecular diagnostics, therapeutics. The name proposed – “Laboratory Medicine and Biomedical Science” – more clearly reflects the program.