

**University System of Georgia Letter of Intent
Master of Science Degree with a Major in Computer Science and
a concentration in Database and Knowledge Systems**

Institution Georgia Southern University

Date March 2009

School/Division College of Information Technology Department Computer Sciences

Name of Proposed Program Master of Science Degree with a Major in Computer Science

Degree Master of Science (M.S.) Major Computer Science CIP Code 11.070101

Starting Date Spring 2010

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Institutional Mission

1. Does this program further the mission of your institution?

The proposed Master of Science degree with a major in Computer Science supports and complements the mission of Georgia Southern University. *“Georgia Southern University is a public comprehensive university devoted to academic distinction in teaching, scholarship, and service.”* Scholarship, in particular research, depends on having an active and vibrant graduate program. The quality of the proposed curriculum and the addition of graduate students in a computing field will directly raise the quality of Georgia Southern’s programs and students.

“Georgia Southern’s nationally accredited academic programs in the liberal arts, sciences, and professional studies prepare a diverse and select undergraduate and graduate student population for leadership and service as world citizens.” The proposed online Master of Science in Computer Science program meets this mission objective by awarding a modern and industry-relevant master’s degree and by producing successful leaders in information technology. Georgia Southern has a diverse and strong alumni base in computer science that can be drawn upon to meet this goal. The undergraduate computer science degree is one of only seven Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) accredited programs in Georgia.

“The University’s hallmark is a culture of engagement that bridges theory with practice, extends the learning environment beyond the classroom, and promotes student growth and life success.” By providing an applied online Master of Science degree with a major in Computer Science, Georgia Southern University will be helping to bridge theory with practice and to promote students to a new level in computer science. Like undergraduate alumni, many graduate alumni will likely remain in Georgia after graduation to fill a need that continues to grow and make a significant contribution to the prosperity of the state and the region. The technological advancement of this region of Georgia depends on providing a high level of education in technology-related fields, such as computer science. Graduate programs in computer science are necessary for the success of the state’s Economic Development Council’s agenda for the building of a high-technology corridor along Interstate 16. Technology based businesses in the region will require a job force of highly skilled computer science professionals.

2. Will the proposed program require a significant alteration of the institutional mission?

No. The proposed Master of Science degree with a major in Computer Science fits nicely into the current institutional mission and requires no alteration in the mission statement.

3. Will the program require the addition of a new organizational unit to the institution (e.g. college, school, division or department)?

No. The program will be offered through the existing Computer Sciences department and will not require any new organizational units within the University or the College of Information Technology.

4. Is it likely that a SACS visit for substantive change will be necessary?

No. The university offers many similar programs in different disciplines at the master’s level. A SACS visit would not be necessary.

5. *How does the proposed program help meet the priorities/goals of your strategic plan?*

According to the Level One plan “Educational and informational technology, in all its manifestations, must pervade new approaches to teaching, learning, scholarship, and administration throughout the University.” The proposed Master of Science degree with a major in Computer Science promotes scholarship through technology. Another goal of Georgia Southern’s strategic plan is to “expand the number and quality of graduate programs offered at Georgia Southern University.” Clearly, the proposed Master of Science degree with a major in Computer Science helps to meet that goal. According to the strategic plan, “Academic distinction is the core of our vision to become a nationally recognized comprehensive university.” For Georgia Southern to achieve academic distinction in computer science, it is necessary to have a graduate program that advances research and innovation in the field.

6. *Will this proposal require an addition or change in your institution’s strategic plan?*

No. The proposed program fits nicely into Georgia Southern University’s strategic plan.

7. *Will the program require an increase in state appropriation within the next five years?*

No. The program can be started with the current faculty. Initially, it will be necessary to offer two sections of 7000-level courses and two sections of 5000/G courses each semester. These courses will be offered through an internal faculty rotation to teach graduate courses within the department. The plan guarantees at least four sections of graduate level coursework per semester. There will be no requests for new faculty lines unless the number of enrolled students exceeds 50. The program is designed to take full advantage of existing faculty members and course offerings. All courses for the program are already listed in the current Georgia Southern catalog and the facilities in the new, \$33 million, College of Information Technology building are more than sufficient to support an online graduate program. Supply costs are minimal and can be absorbed by the current Computer Sciences budget.

8. *If this is a baccalaureate program, will you be asking for an exception to the 120 hour expectation or to the core curriculum?*

No. This is not a baccalaureate program.

9. *Are there program delivery formats that will be new or different for your institution?*

No. The web delivery format is consistent with those offered currently at Georgia Southern University in other online programs such as the WebMBA and the BSIT undergraduate information technology program.

Need

Provide a brief justification for why the state needs graduates from this program and for why the University System needs this program. Give a brief justification for why your institution should offer the program.

- **National Demand**

According to the U.S. Department of Labor (<http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos042.htm>), “The rapid spread of computers and information technology has generated a need for highly trained workers proficient in various job functions. These workers—computer scientists, **database administrators**, and network systems and data communication analysts—include a wide range of computer specialists. Job tasks and occupational titles used to describe these workers evolve rapidly, reflecting new areas of specialization or changes in technology, as well as the preferences and practices of employers. Job increases will be driven

by very rapid growth in computer systems design and related services, which is projected to be one of the fastest growing industries in the U.S. economy.” Of particular importance is a segment of jobs dealing with data intensive applications, including data mining/data warehouse professionals. The proposed Master of Science degree with a major in Computer Science has been designed to meet these specific needs. Numerous companies have expressed interest in hiring graduates of the proposed program.

- **Statewide Demand**

In terms of raising the level of education in the state of Georgia, the Master of Science degree with a major in Computer Science will create much needed SACS-accredited faculty for two-year institutions of higher education. Numerous letters of support for a graduate program in computer science have been received from two-year colleges throughout the state of Georgia. In addition, there are signed statements of support and letters of support for a master’s degree program from Georgia employers, including Coca-Cola, Morris Technologies, UPS, NCR, Bravepoint, Red-Clay Consulting, Creative Coast, and many others.

According to the Georgia Tech Research News (<http://gtresearchnews.gatech.edu/newsrelease/occupations.htm>), “Though Georgia’s technology industry has been in a downturn since 2001, the number of state residents employed in high tech occupations—paying high wages—has actually grown during that time, a Georgia Institute of Technology analysis of employment and wage data shows. Computer systems and software specialists are enabling a lot of different industries, not just information technology services firms, said Jan Youtie, a principal research associate in Georgia Tech’s Economic Development Institute. Analyzing data from both federal and state sources, Youtie and collaborators Philip Shapira and Jue Wang found that jobs requiring high levels of education grew 12% in Georgia from 2001 to 2003. While these high tech occupations added approximately 9,000 jobs to the state’s economy, employment in the rest of the state’s occupations declined by two percent.” In fact, according to Youtie, Shapira, and Wang, the number of computer systems and software specialists grew 26% over that period of time. Research of advertisements in newspaper media during 2005, 2006, and early 2007 (Jovanovic 2007) shows an increased demand for master’s level employees relative to bachelor’s degree only. Thirty-five to 57% of advertisements listed master’s as a required degree in their high tech ads. The proposed program can help meet this demand.

- **Regional Demand**

The Georgia Southern University College of Information Technology is actively involved in promoting companies to move computing services to rural areas, also known as “rural outsourcing.” Rural outsourcing is poised to produce the next wave of technology related jobs in the United States. Georgia Southern University is perfectly situated to create this type of talent pool. Morris Technologies, a spin-off company from Morris Multimedia, is developing software in partnership with the College of Information Technology, using Georgia Southern computer science students and graduates. Georgia Southern is also partnered with National Cash Register (NCR) to produce and develop point of sales software. A graduate program would expand the talent pool and allow the University to engage in a broader range of rural outsourcing opportunities. The Master of Science degree with a major in Computer Science at Georgia Southern University will be the only such online degree concentration offered in Georgia.

- **University Demand**

Currently, there are no graduate programs in the College of Information Technology. The College of Information Technology has over 500 undergraduate Information Technology (IT), Information Systems (IS), and Computer Science (CS) majors, all of whom are involved in computer programming. An internal survey of CS and IT students and a survey of CS alumni, administered in March 2007, identified a strong interest in a graduate program. The Georgia Southern University Computer Sciences Department has a large minority (35%) and female enrollment (12%) in the undergraduate program as well as a number of highly qualified minority graduates interested in a graduate program in computer science. Offering the

proposed degree program will open opportunities in the technology field to this underrepresented group. In addition, because it will be a fully online master's program, students can continue to work full-time regardless of location.

In addition to support from the companies mentioned above, EMC and Progress Software currently support the undergraduate program with a keen interest in graduate level students as indicated in their letters of support for the proposed program. There is now a high demand for a global talent pool in database and knowledge systems and if Georgia does not provide these educational opportunities for qualified individuals in Georgia, then companies will look elsewhere to fill their positions.

If the program is applied or professional in nature, describe the kind of data you will use to support the need for the program.

Because this is a professional program, the following sources are used to justify need:

- U.S. Department of Labor projections
- Letters of support from Georgia junior colleges and technical schools
- Letters of support from regional businesses and businesses throughout the state
- Letters of support from out-of-state corporations and businesses with a presence and/or a customer base within the state of Georgia
- Statement of support signed by statewide businesses
- Survey of students in the College of Information Technology (specifically CS and IT)
- Survey of alumni
- Letters of support from regional software developers

Provide a brief description of whether and why students will enroll in the program. What kinds of data do you intend to use to show student demand for the program?

An internal survey of IT students and a survey of CS alumni administered in March 2007 identified a strong interest in a graduate program in computing. The survey questions asked to Computer Science alumni are listed below.

- Q1:** Do you believe that a graduate program in computer science is needed at Georgia Southern?
- Q2:** If Georgia Southern had a master's degree in computer science when you graduated, would you have considered enrolling?
- Q3:** At some point in time, would you consider enrolling in graduate school in computer science at Georgia Southern?

Q1	M	F	Total	Q2	M	F	Total	Q3	M	F	Total
strongly agree	13	2	15	definitely	9	2	11	definitely	3	2	5
agree	3	0	3	probably	5	0	5	probably	6	0	6
don't care	0	0	0	maybe	1	0	1	maybe	6	0	6
disagree	0	0	0	probably not	0	0	0	probably not	0	0	0
strongly disagree	0	0	0	definitely not	1	0	1	definitely not	1	0	1
Total	16	2	18	Total	16	2	18	Total	16	2	18

M = male **F** = female

The survey indicates a strong interest in a graduate program in computer science with 100% of alumni agreeing that a graduate program is needed, 89% willing to have considered a graduate degree

from Georgia Southern directly after graduation, and 28% willing to return to participate in the graduate program.

An internal survey of computer science undergraduate upperclassmen also reveals a strong interest in a graduate program. Questions similar to the alumni survey were asked.

Q1: Do you believe that a graduate program in computer science is needed at Georgia Southern?

Q2: After graduation, would you consider enrolling in graduate school in computer science at Georgia Southern?

Q1	M	F	Total	Q2	M	F	Total
definitely	13	0	13	definitely	36	6	42
probably	17	1	18	probably	16	4	20
maybe	18	4	21	maybe	4	0	4
probably not	8	3	11	probably not	1	0	1
definitely not	1	3	4	definitely not	0	1	1
Total	57	11	68	Total	57	11	68

M = male F = female

Eighty-four percent of those surveyed strongly agreed or agreed that a graduate program is needed in computer science with 31% of respondents definitely willing to participate, and another 31% probably willing to participate.

To gauge interest in other departments within the College, a similar survey was given to Information Technology (IT) upperclassmen to determine interest in a computer science graduate degree. The proposed degree is tailored to allow IT graduates provisional entry into the program. The questions asked in the survey are shown below.

Q1: After graduation, would you be interested in applying to a graduate program at Georgia Southern?

Q2: Do you believe a graduate program in computing is needed at Georgia Southern?

Q1	M	F	Total	Q2	M	F	Total
strongly agree	8	2	10	definitely	3	1	4
agree	1	0	1	probably	3	1	4
don't care	1	0	1	maybe	1	0	1
disagree	0	0	0	probably not	3	1	4
strongly disagree	0	1	1	definitely not	0	0	0
Total	10	3	13	Total	10	3	13

M = male F = female

The survey indicates a strong interest outside the department for a graduate program in computer science. Ninety-one percent of IT majors think a graduate program in computing is needed at Georgia Southern and 19% were definitely willing to participate in one of the proposed areas. Twenty-five percent of IT upperclassmen were probably willing to participate. Since there are 400+ IT majors, this survey predicts strong participation from the IT department in the proposed computer science graduate program.

Students

Estimate the number of students who will graduate annually from the program in the steady state. What percentage will likely be from other existing programs? Which programs will the students come from?

Based on surveys and conservative estimates of future graduation rates, it is predicted that at least 19% of 30 undergraduate computer science students who graduate each year, and 31% of 60 undergraduate information technology students who graduate each year, will consider entering the online program— approximately 24 students per year. In addition, it is conservatively expected that another 20-30 students from outside the University but within the United States will enter the program and about 10-30 foreign national students. Initially, the steady state enrollment is estimated to be at least 50 students by three years after inception of the program.

Budget

1. Estimate the steady-state cost of the program (in current dollars) and indicate the percentages from reallocation, student fees, grants, and outside dollars.

Steady-State Costs			
A. Existing personnel		EFT	Dollars
	Faculty	.45	\$36,417
	PT Faculty		0
	Graduate Assistants		0
	Administrators		0
	Support Staff		0
	Fringe Benefits		\$2,786
	Other personnel costs		
	TOTAL		\$39,203
B. New Personnel			
	Faculty (1Lecturer)	1.00	\$50,000
	PT Faculty		0
	Graduate Assistants	1.00	\$7,200
	Administrators		0
	Support Staff		0
	Fringe Benefits (18%/3%)		\$9,300
	Other personnel costs		0
	TOTAL		\$66,500
C. Physical Facilities			0
	TOTAL		\$0
D. Operating Costs			
	Supplies/Expenses		\$500
	Travel (recruiting)		\$500
	Equipment		0
	Library/Learning Resources		0
	Other		0
	TOTAL		\$1,000

The implementation plan for the degree program is to phase in the courses over a three-year period. Therefore, funding for the full-time lecturer position could also be phased in from a part-time position. The position will be funded from revenue generated from the online tuition.

With an online degree, office supplies are minimal. It is anticipated that some costs will arise for mailing materials to students. Further, faculty travel funds have been allocated to recruit prospective students. The operating costs will be covered through a reallocation of funds.

2. *Estimate start-up costs for the program and indicate possible fund sources.*

Start-up Costs		
	Library/Learning Resources	0
	Equipment	0
	Other (stipends for 7 online course preps)	\$21,000
	TOTAL	\$21,000

Grand Total \$127,703

The University’s Center for Online Learning supports faculty that are developing online courses. The program anticipates developing seven courses over a period of several years starting in summer 2009 at a cost of \$3,000 per course in faculty stipends.

Facilities

If additional facilities are needed, how they will be acquired.

No new facilities will be needed. Georgia Southern University has a new \$33 million College of Information Technology facility that has significant capacity for growth.

Curriculum and Delivery

1. *Are there special characteristics of the curriculum (as compared to similar programs)?*

The proposed program has a single concentration in the area of Database and Knowledge Systems. The curriculum is designed to take advantage of faculty expertise. The department has faculty experts in data mining, data warehousing, optical networking, wireless networking, storage technology, and software engineering for data intensive systems. Only two online programs nationally offer a similar explicit concentration: Regis University (Database Technologies) and Boston University (Database and Knowledge Management).

Georgia Southern will offer the only 30 hour, online Master of Science degree with a major in Computer Science in Georgia. The other online degrees are at Columbus State University (36), Georgia Southwestern State University (36), Southern Polytechnic State University (36), and Kennesaw State University (36). The University of Georgia on-campus degree is 32 semester hours. The Georgia Tech on-campus M.S.C.S. is 36 hours. The national norm for an M.S.C.S. is 30 hours. For example, the M.S.C.S. is 30 hours at Alabama, Auburn, Tennessee, Vanderbilt, Duke, Mississippi, and Florida to name just a few universities in the South. The proposed M.S. is in a high demand field of study. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2008-09 Edition (<http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos042.htm>), jobs for database administrators are “expected to increase much faster than the average as organizations continue to expand their use of technology. Workers must be able to learn new technologies quickly for these constantly evolving occupations.”

M.S.C.S. online course offerings from other Georgia institutions in fall 2008 (see the table) definitively show the uniqueness of this proposed program as only one course in the proposed curriculum (Database) was duplicated.

University	Masters Degree	Courses (Fall 08 only) <i>* means not in the Ga. Sou. concentration</i>	Enrollment
Columbus State University	Applied Computer Science	Algorithm Analysis*	5
		Computer Graphics*	5
		Computer Architecture*	6
		Computer Networks*	6
		Principles of Computer Science*	26
		Programming & Data Structures*	31
		Human-Computer Interface*	13
		Advanced Operating Systems*	20
		Information Systems Assurance*	15
		Advanced Programming Languages*	4
		Computer Forensics*	10
		Adv Software Design*	18
Software testing & QA*	15		
Georgia Southwestern State University	Computer Science	Inf. Security*	3
		Internet Architecture*	3
		XML Technology*	3
Southern Polytechnic State University	Information Technology	Database	16
		Architecture*	16
		Operating Systems*	16
		Math Structures*	16
Kennesaw State University (courses are not exclusively online; they are mixed-mode)	Applied Computer Science	Concepts in Computer Science*	10
		Computing in the Global Economy*	7
		Computing Systems*	6
		OO Software Analysis Design*	7
		Software Engineering*	17
		Embedded Systems*	9
		Database	17
Linux & Python*	10		

The degree utilizes the uniqueness of the departmental faculty and the infrastructure resources of the College of Information Technology and its close relationship with the College of Business Administration. The undergraduate prerequisite courses (for applicants without a computer science degree) are also being developed online with the goal of allowing Georgia's two-year college students to take upper-level courses while finishing their associate's degree. The department is currently pursuing an articulation agreement with Georgia Perimeter College as a pilot. The Computer Sciences department is pursuing the use of e-books (including those authored by College faculty) to reduce costs to students. All of Georgia Southern's peer and aspirational universities offer a M.S.C.S; however none offer an online M.S.C.S. degree.

2. Will the program require new or special student services?

No

3. *Will the program be attractive to underserved populations?*

Student surveys of College of Information Technology undergraduate students and alumni at Georgia Southern indicate that Database and Knowledge Systems is a popular choice for graduate school for underserved minorities. The professional orientation of the proposed program and its online delivery format, in particular, will contribute to the program’s attractiveness and remove key financial barriers for the underserved population of Georgia. The pool of available talent will lead to rural outsourcing opportunities for businesses in Georgia. The Master of Science degree with a major in Computer Science is predicted to have a large minority enrollment as Georgia Southern University attracts a large minority population, which has been evident in the undergraduate computer science and information technology enrollments. In addition, plans are to actively recruit graduate students from southern and central Georgia, regions that are some of the most technologically underserved in Georgia. Without the need for students to relocate, there is a good opportunity to succeed in enrolling students regardless of living or work locations.

Collaboration

It should be noted here that efficient use of state resources is an essential ingredient in new program approval. If there is any doubt about how you will address the questions below, a conference is recommended.

1. *If there are similar programs in your service area, how will the proposed program affect them?*

Other master’s degree programs in computer science offered in Georgia are summarized in the table below. There is an online master’s in applied computer science at Columbus State University with concentrations in Software Development or Information Assurance. These concentrations are different than what is proposed here (Database and Knowledge Systems). Kennesaw State University offers a Master of Science degree with a major in Applied Computer Science on campus with provisions for instructional delivery using web-based technologies. Students can attend lectures on campus or remotely from work or home. Through a choice of electives, students may concentrate in one of five areas: Software Engineering and Architecture, Embedded Systems and Robotics, Distributed Computing, Bio-Medical Computing, and Digital Game Design. All these areas are also different than the proposed concentration in Georgia Southern’s program. A table summarizing all master’s programs in Georgia is shown below.

The closest institution offering a master’s degree in computer science, Armstrong Atlantic State University, has a traditional program in terms of delivery and content.

School	Type of program	Concentrations
Armstrong Atlantic	Traditional	None
Columbus State	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Assurance • Software development
Georgia Southwestern	Online	None
Georgia State	Traditional	None
Georgia Tech	Traditional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computing • Design, evaluation, and cognitive modeling • Information design and technology • Psychology
Kennesaw	Traditional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Software Engineering and Architecture • Embedded Systems and Robotics • Distributed Computing

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bio-Medical Computing • Digital Game Design
Southern Polytechnic	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Software engineering
Univ. of Georgia	Traditional	None
West Georgia	Traditional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human-centered computing • Software development • System and network administration • Web technologies

Our proposed program should not negatively affect the computer science graduate programs at any of the institutions in the service area. In fact, the proposed master's program will positively affect the Ph.D. programs in computer science at Georgia Tech, Georgia State, and the University of Georgia.

2. *Do you plan a collaborative arrangement with another institution or entity?*

No. Not at this time. The department currently has all the resources in place to offer the program.

Other

Are there other elements of the proposed program that might give the staff greater insight into the overall value of this program to the University System strategic plan?

This program has been developed with the University System's strategic plan in mind. The proposed online program enhances the University System's strategic plan in the following ways.

GOAL 1

Educate graduates who are intellectually and ethically informed individuals with well-defined skills and knowledge who are capable leaders, creative thinkers, and contributing citizens.

This is the primary goal of the program. The program provides specific skills in applied areas of data intensive computing that give students a solid foundation to become leaders and thinkers in the computing field.

GOAL 2

Expand participation by increasing access, enhancing diversity, improving service to nontraditional students, expanding use of distance education, advancing public library usage, and marketing the advantages of postsecondary education.

Georgia Southern will be the only university in Georgia to offer the database concentration. This online program is designed to allow students in related computing fields (information systems, information technology, computer engineering, etc.), as well as academically prepared students from the sciences and other related fields, to enter this degree program and obtain online an applied degree in a high demand field, namely database and knowledge systems. This greatly expands the opportunities for a wide and diverse group of students.

GOAL 3

Increase academic productivity through improved recruitment, increased retention, accelerated graduation, expanded credit generation, augmented continuing education opportunities, and current technology.

The department's undergraduate survey has shown that there is remarkable interest among undergraduate computer science and information technology students to pursue a graduate degree in computer science at Georgia Southern. If projections hold true, this graduate program should increase enrollments within the Computer Sciences department significantly. One great benefit of a graduate program in a technical area is to increase the number of technically competent students. It is anticipated

that a small group of domestic students will be in residence while participating in the online program. These students can be hired as tutors in programming classes, as assistant network engineers to help manage campus networks, as knowledgeable help desk employees, and as lab assistants. This creates an academic environment which results in higher achievement, higher enrollment of qualified students, and consequently in higher graduation rates and increased retention.

GOAL 4

Emphasize the recruitment, hiring, and retention of the best possible faculty, staff, and administration.

Many research faculty will not consider working at a university without a graduate program, leaving Georgia Southern University at a disadvantage in the recruitment of qualified faculty in computer sciences. The Computer Sciences department at Georgia Southern needs a graduate program to attract highly qualified candidates.

GOAL 5

Help accelerate Georgia's economic development by providing needed graduates, offering appropriate academic programs, and marketing the System and its institutions as economic assets of the state.

The professional orientation offered by the proposed program is, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, a high-demand field. They stated, "Employment is expected to increase much faster than the average as organizations continue to adopt increasingly sophisticated technologies. Job prospects are favorable. The computer scientists and database administrators occupation is expected to grow 37% from 2006 to 2016, much faster than average for all occupations. Job increases will be driven by very rapid growth in computer systems design and related services, which is projected to be one of the fastest growing industries in the U.S. economy."

GOAL 7

Provide and maintain superior facilities, funded by innovative mechanisms that shorten the time that elapses between approval and use.

Georgia Southern's current facilities for online delivery are second to none. To use these facilities to their maximum potential, the Department of Computer Sciences needs a graduate program. In fact, to maintain the current level of facilities, it may be necessary in the future to secure large research grants from government and corporations. This is not possible without a thriving graduate program.

In summary, the department believes there is ample opportunity for a Master of Science degree with a major in Computer Science to be successful for the following reasons:

- (1) it is not duplicative with other University System degrees;
- (2) its fully online delivery format allows access for all qualified Georgians (and others beyond state borders);
- (3) financial resources are minimal and can be accommodated locally;
- (4) it addresses high demand for graduates in an emerging technology field; and
- (5) it supports and enhances the System's and the University's strategic plans.

A Master of Science degree with a major in Computer Science will strengthen undergraduate research for students in the Georgia Southern University College of Information Technology and in the Department of Computer Sciences. In addition, it will provide a more challenging work atmosphere, further contributing to rising academic standards in an institution committed to excellence in teaching on its path to national prominence. Georgia Southern University is ready for this program. The demand is here, there are qualified faculty with extensive experience creating and running graduate programs at other institutions, and the facilities dedicated to online programs are second to none.