

*Establishing a PSM Degree:
Meeting the Challenges with the
Approval Process*

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The CSU-Fresno Case Study

- Two PSM Degrees Approved: Master's of Biotechnology and Master's of Science in Forensic Science
- Feasibility Study (March 2002) and Implementation Award (April 2003) funded by CGS/Sloan Foundation
- Biotechnology Degree approved as a pilot program in March 2005
- Forensic Science Degree approved as a regular degree program in August 2006

The Nature of the PSM

- “Science” or “Math” Graduate Degree
- Strong Applications Emphasis
- Emphasis on regional workforce needs
- Interdisciplinary

Building an Interdisciplinary Ethic: Overcoming the “Territorial Imperative”

- College- or School-Based Identity
- College- or School-Based Allocation of Resources
- College- or School-Based Cultural Practices
- Defining the Synergistic Advantages

The Interdisciplinary Mix for the CSU-Fresno Programs

- **Biotechnology Program:**

- College of Science and Mathematics (CSM)
- College of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (CAST)
- College of Engineering and Computer Science (CECS)
- Sid Craig School of Business (CSB)

- **Forensic Science Program:**

- College of Science and Mathematics (CSM)
- College of Social Sciences (CSS)

The Historical Context for the CSU-Fresno Programs

- **Biotechnology Program**

- Built from an established (1988) Graduate-level Certificate Program
- Interdisciplinary between CSM and CAST

- **Forensic Science Program**

- Conceptual beginnings in 1998 with discussions of a Doctoral Program in Criminal Justice (Joint with the UC-Davis) and involving the CSM and CSS
- California legislation passed in 2002 required that Criminalists have Master's degrees to perform DNA analyses—prompted emphasis on Master's degrees

Finding Allies in Administration

Essential:

- The Provost
- The Graduate Dean

Important:

- The College or School Deans

External Partners as Allies

- External businesses and agencies are University Development partners
- Encourage PSM business/agency partners to communicate their enthusiasm for the programs

Stumbling Blocks: “What’s in a Name?”

- College of “Innovation”
- “Professional” Science Master’s Degree
- “Master’s of Science” Degree

Finding Allies in Unlikely Places: Advantages of the Bureaucratic Grind

- Curricular Approval of New Types of Courses—the School of Education
- Budgetary Review—the School of Business and College of Agriculture

Dealing with the Revolving Door: Leadership Transitions

- Career Changes for Faculty Leaders of the programs
- Administrative Leaders are even more transitional
- The Organizational Structure of the University could radically change

Recommendations for Getting Through the Approval Process

- Early engagement of the Provost and the Graduate Dean
- Exploit new and established partnerships or programs, both internal and external
- Expect changes and needs to re-design
- “Expect Delays”
- Realism about funding requirements to approve and launch the program—request and marshal resources carefully