

WSU News

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Regents approve four new programs to support digital transformation initiative

By Sara Ornelas, Marketing Content Strategist

- **The Kansas Board of Regents approved four new degree programs at Wichita State University.**
- **The new programs launch in spring 2021.**
- **The degree programs will help advance the university's National Institute for Digital Transformation.**

With the intention of furthering Wichita State University's commitment to digital transformation, the Kansas Board of Regents has approved four degree programs that will launch in spring 2021: Bachelor of Arts in Applied Linguistics, Master of Science in Data Science, Master of Science in Business Analytics, and Master of Science in Mathematical Foundations of Data Analysis.

These degrees are in addition to existing undergraduate and graduate degrees and certificates in applied computing, computer science, cybersecurity, homeland security, and supply chain.

"We are excited to add these new programs to advance Wichita State's digital ecosystem, which includes the new over-arching National Institute for Digital Transformation," said Dr. Carolyn Shaw, associate vice president for strategic enrollment management at Wichita State. "These programs align with KBOR's Building a Future Strategic Plan by enhancing the talent pipeline to support businesses in Kansas and promote economic prosperity."

Dr. Shirley Lefever, interim provost at Wichita State, said the new degrees were developed based on burgeoning demand of area business and industry.

"Access to very large data sets and the ability to computationally extract meaningful data is revolutionizing decision making and strategic planning across a wide range of domains: business, industry, government and education," she said. "The launch of these degrees is timely as Wichita State positions itself to be a primary educator and researcher in the digital space, which will assist business and industry to diversify into this growing field."

- The **Bachelor of Applied Linguistics**, out of the Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, program arose out of a student need for an option to major in linguistics, and it is intended as an interdisciplinary major for a diverse student population. The field of linguistics is currently at the forefront of interdisciplinary research in artificial intelligence, data science, computer science, speech pathology, natural language processing, and marketing and branding strategies.

“The bachelor’s in in applied linguistics addresses the need for these kinds of skills,” said Dr. Andrew Hippisley, dean of the Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. “It is an extension of the graduate data analytics and data science degrees into the realm of humanities.”

Additionally, linguistics is particularly appealing to underserved student populations as more and more Native American languages are being revitalized and studied under several sub-fields of linguistics.

For more information on the Bachelor of Applied Linguistics program, please contact Dr. Mythili Menon, assistant professor of English and linguistics and director of linguistics, at 316-978-6763 or mythili.menon@wichita.edu.

- **Master of Science in Data Science** offers students numerous opportunities to learn how to build a data pipeline and transform raw data in ways that provide end-users a competitive advantage.

“Digital transformation is disrupting every industry, including engineering,” said Dr. Dennis Livesay, dean of the College of Engineering. “The essential aspects of all digital transformation are massive amounts of data and the ability to extract knowledge from it. The MS in Data Science will prepare WSU graduates to thrive in this new economy.

Livesay said this new degree program is a central piece of the College of Engineering’s efforts to embrace computing and data. “Along with our other new MS degree in Computing and formation of the School of Computing, we have put the structures in place to better serve the digital industries of the future,” he said.

For more information on the Master of Science in Data Science and Engineering, contact Dr. Steven Skinner, interim dean of the College of Engineering, at steven.skinner@wichita.edu or 316-978-3400.

- Area businesses have indicated the need for higher level analytical skills, which the W. Frank Barton School of business is addressing through a **Master of Science degree in Business Analytics (MSBA)**. The curriculum will focus on developing contemporary competencies via innovative hands-on activities and industry practices.

“To survive and thrive in today’s world, businesses must distill innovative insights from a sea of data sources,” said Dr. Larisa Genin, W. Frank Barton School of Business, Wichita State University. “Many companies are looking to the Barton School to provide more graduates with the analytical skill set they need to compete in this competitive and challenging global

marketplace. We're excited to offer a new master's degree in business analytics that will equip our students with the technical and analytical skills to make a difference today and in the future.

To serve the needs of professionals in the field, the MSBA program will offer two tracks. The management track will focus on developing capabilities and mastery in leading analytics initiatives. The data science track aims to impart mastery in the use of innovative tools and techniques in data analytics.

For more information on the MSBA, contact Dr. Sue Abdinnour, Director, Masters of Science in Business Analytics Program for the W. Frank Barton School of Business, at 316-978-6654 or sue.abdinnour@wichita.edu.

- **Master of Science in Mathematical Foundations of Data Analysis**, also in the Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, is an interdisciplinary program that focuses on the mathematical foundation behind data analysis methods and will provide a fundamental understanding of the mathematics behind data science algorithms and methods. Graduates will have not only in-depth mathematic and statistical understanding of data analysis methods, but also the knowledge of how to apply these methods to different areas within this ever-growing field.

For more information on the Master of Science in Mathematical Foundations of Data Analysis, contact Dr. Andrew Hippisley at 316-978-6659 or hippisley@wichita.edu.

Enrollment in these programs will begin immediately. To enroll, contact [Wichita State Admissions](#) at admissions@wichita.edu or 316-978-9085.