

March 2, 2022

Dr. Bernadette Vankeerbergen  
Assistant Dean of Curriculum  
College of Arts and Sciences

Dear Dr. Vankeerbergen,

I write this letter in support of the Department of Geography's proposal for a Master of Geographic Information Science and Technology (MGIST). I am familiar with the proposal and have commented on previous drafts. It is at the top of my list of exciting new programs in the social and behavioral sciences.

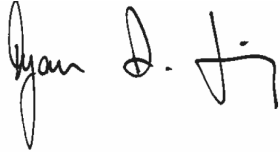
There is high demand for expertise in Geographical Information Science (GIS) in the private and public sectors. If we open the *New York Times* or go to the CDC website, we see data visualizations that help us understand the spread of disease across the country. This is GIST in action. City governments also rely on GIS technology for their transportation infrastructure and crime mapping. The technology is quickly evolving, and professionals will need advanced training to use cutting edge applications. The proposed curriculum for a MGIST provides precisely this education.

In addition to meeting market demand and benefiting our students by preparing them for a vibrant employment sector, the program enables our Department of Geography to raise its national profile. We have some of the very best scholars in the world in GIST. The department continues to recruit in this area, as evidenced by the recent receipt of a RAISE hire, and I have recommended to the Executive Dean that we hire a GIS technician to ensure that infrastructure and technical needs are met.

I will refrain from reiterating the content of the proposal, but I unequivocally endorse it. The market evaluation and curriculum development were the result of considerable research and forethought. The department has identified several organizations that could send staff to receive GIST training, and the curriculum is well designed to meet the learning objectives. I especially appreciated the effort to develop a plan for attracting underrepresented groups to the program.

This is a valuable program and a rich opportunity to put OSU on the map (pun intended) with its GIST graduate curriculum. We have the capacity to provide one of the best programs in the state, and even the nation. I offer my unqualified support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ryan D. King". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R" and a distinct "D" and "K".

Ryan D. King  
Dean of Social and Behavioral Sciences  
College of Arts and Sciences