

MEMORANDUM

TO: MS in Artificial Intelligence Proposal Review Committee
FROM: Li Xu
DATE: April 16, 2026
RE: Approval of the Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence Proposal

The committee has completed its review of the proposal for the Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence (MS in AI), submitted by the School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (EECS). Following initial review by the Budget Committee and a subsequent round of written follow-up questions (dated April 11, 2026), the committee finds that the EECS responses satisfactorily address all financial, curricular, staffing, and administrative concerns raised during review.

The committee approves the proposal and recommends that it proceed to the next stage of institutional review. The full text of both sets of EECS responses is attached as an appendix to this memo.

Basis for Approval

- **Enrollment projections.** Projections are supported by documented industry demand, peer-institution trends (e.g., OSU), and the program's accessibility to students from engineering, mathematics, statistics, and science disciplines who would not otherwise apply to the existing MS in CS. Current MS in CS enrollment stands at approximately 30 students (Fall 2025, down from 51 in Fall 2020); the broader applicant pool and growing market demand for AI specialists support the projected 20-student annual increase. Only three comparable MS in AI programs exist in the region (UW Seattle online, Seattle University online, OSU in-person).
- **Curriculum.** Existing courses in AI, machine learning, data science, computer vision, deep learning, reinforcement learning, and generative AI cover the required foundations and modern advances. No substantial new course development is anticipated; alignment with evolving industry needs will be maintained through targeted course updates and hands-on project components.
- **Instructional capacity.** EECS has 11 tenured/tenure-track faculty, 2 research faculty, and 5 career-track faculty in AI/ML-related areas. A majority of proposed courses are already offered. No overload teaching is anticipated for the MS in AI; additional instructional capacity would only be required if a future BS in AI program is added.
- **Facilities.** No dedicated lab space is required. EECS has procured GPU servers (6 Nvidia A40, 2 Nvidia A100, each with 512 GB RAM) for coursework and capstone projects, supplemented by WSU's Kamiak and Camas HPC clusters.
- **Support services.** Recruiting, advising, and career placement will be managed through existing EECS and VCEA staff and faculty. Pre-COVID graduate enrollment across EECS programs reached approximately 250 students; current enrollment is around 150, leaving capacity to absorb MS in AI growth without additional support resources.
- **Competitive positioning.** EECS is ranked #45 nationally in AI (CSrankings.org), ahead of OSU (#48). As WSU's land-grant mission draws from a broad base of undergraduate programs campus-wide, the School is well positioned to attract a diverse applicant pool.

APPENDIX: EECS Responses to Committee Questions

Budget Committee Questions

Q: Justification for enrollment projections and competition from in-state programs?

A: Only three regional MS AI programs exist (UW Seattle online, Seattle University online, OSU in-person). The 20-student/year increase is supported by WSU's land-grant feeder programs, EECS's #45 national AI ranking, and double-digit projected job growth for AI/ML roles through 2034 (IEEE-USA). A combined BS+MS pathway is also under exploration.

Q: How will instructional requirements be met without additional cost?

A: 11 tenured/tenure-track, 2 research, and 5 career-track faculty cover AI/ML areas. Most proposed courses already exist. No overload is anticipated for the MS program.

Q: Breakdown of facility and lab costs?

A: No dedicated lab space required. Existing GPU servers (6×A40, 2×A100) plus WSU Kamiak and Camas HPC clusters are sufficient.

Q: How will recruiting, advising, and placement be managed and funded?

A: Existing EECS/VCEA staff and faculty. Pre-COVID graduate enrollment was ~250; current is ~150, leaving capacity to absorb growth.

Follow-Up Questions (April 11, 2026)

Q: Basis for projecting MS AI enrollment will exceed MS CS? New students vs. redistribution?

A: The AI designation attracts a broader pool (engineering, math, statistics, sciences, working professionals) beyond traditional CS applicants. The program is intentionally complementary to the MS in CS. Most enrollment is expected to represent new demand. The MS in AI is also open to non-CS baccalaureate holders, a population unlikely to apply to the MS in CS. Current MS in CS enrollment is ~30 (Fall 2025), down from 51 (Fall 2020).

Q: Are existing courses sufficiently aligned with what students and employers expect from a dedicated AI degree?

A: Existing courses cover AI, ML, data science, computer vision, deep learning, reinforcement learning, and generative AI. Foundational concepts evolve more gradually than engineering practice; targeted course updates and project-based components will maintain alignment. No substantial new course development is needed.

Q: How will instructional and advising demands be managed at the enrollment scale envisioned?

A: The program is designed to scale within existing capacity via efficient scheduling, TA/grader support, and integration into current advising models. The WSU Translational AI Research Center will co-mentor students. Enrollment growth is phased; targeted additions (faculty, staff) will be pursued only if sustained demand warrants.