Why are you recommending a change in the School’s name?

Our School needs a more encompassing name to reflect the expansion of our programmatic offerings, including our anticipated MS degree in information management. Our faculty recommend “School of Information Sciences” to encompass the full range of intellectual practices around information and information institutions. While “library science” refers to work within a particular institution, “information sciences” refers to multiple forms of knowledge across institutions. We are not reducing or replacing anything that we are doing now. We are expanding our School, and we are enriching and growing all our programs, including our top-ranked MS degree in library and information science. Our commitment to libraries is undiminished and non-negotiable.

Has our School previously changed its name?

Our current name, acquired in 1981, is our fifth; as of this year, we’ve had it longer than any other. The history of name changes for our School is detailed in the following timeline:

1893   The library science program at the Armour Institute of Technology in Chicago is founded.

1897   The Department of Library Science is moved to Urbana and renamed the Illinois State Library School.

1926   The School is renamed the University of Illinois Library School.

1959   The School is renamed the Graduate School of Library Science.

1981   The School is renamed the Graduate School of Library and Information Science (GSLIS).

These name changes reflect the ongoing evolution of our School to adapt to student needs and the needs of a changing world. The proposed name change to “School of Information Sciences” would be another step in this evolution, positioning our School for broader impact both on our campus and beyond.

For a detailed timeline of our School’s history, visit our History of GSLIS web page.
How will we keep our identity as a school in the field of LIS with this new name?

We have been very thoughtful with regard to maintaining our School’s identity in the field as well as our reputation of excellence. A name change would happen only as part of a larger agenda to further our achievements and expand our impact on society. Maintaining our independence as a school is paramount; a name change such as the one suggested would clarify our identity on campus as a college-level unit, one that is free to make its own decisions about how to organize and operate. This autonomy is extremely valuable in the pursuit of our mission, allowing us to respond adeptly to student needs and local and national needs. We are aware that other LIS schools have been forced to merge, and we don’t intend to do that. We intend to grow in scale and scope, underscoring our leadership in the field by bringing the culture and values of LIS and librarianship to more information professions and settings. In addition, we will sustain and grow our MS in LIS program.

What is the process for changing the name of an academic unit at this university?

Following consideration and an affirmative vote by faculty of the School, the proposal then is considered in sequence by the following entities (see row 21 of the grid in Levels of Governance for Program and Curricular Changes):

- Graduate College, Urbana-Champaign Campus
- Office of the Provost, Urbana-Champaign Campus
- Senate Committee on Educational Policy, Urbana-Champaign Campus
- Senate of the Urbana-Champaign Campus (approval by vote)
- University of Illinois (system) Senates Conference
- University of Illinois Board of Trustees (approval by vote)
- Illinois Board of Higher Education

This process can take varying lengths of time given each of the committee schedules, but typically this kind of process will extend beyond a year. Faculty voted 22 to 6 to propose a new name and consult with stakeholders. Faculty will need to vote again, taking stakeholder input into account, in order to move forward with a name change.

Will a name change affect our #1 ranking by U.S. News & World Report?

Rankings are based on review by our peers, and the intention of these proposed changes is to maintain and strengthen our visibility and outwardly reflect our innovations. When we compare our situation to that of similar schools, we see no sign that a name change of the sort we are considering has harmed any program’s ranking; in fact, some programs with similar names to the one proposed for our School have risen in the rankings (see U.S. News & World Report for the latest rankings in LIS education). Major changes in rankings from 1999-2013 included Washington’s Information School, Michigan’s School of Information, and Syracuse’s
School of Information Studies joining North Carolina’s School of Information and Library Science along with Illinois as the top five schools. Texas’ School of Information moved up substantially and now sits, tied with Rutgers’ School of Communication and Information, at the top of the next cluster.

**Can you provide details about the new degree?**

The new degree will complement our current master’s degree in library and information science, a program that has been ranked number one by *U.S. News & World Report* for nearly two decades. Our commitment to librarianship remains strong, and we are working to increase enrollment in our current program while launching the new master’s degree, which is pending approval by the Illinois Board of Higher Education. It is important to note that prospective students will be able to choose between earning an MS degree in library and information science or an MS degree information management—both of which will be transcriptable—depending on their professional interests.

The MS degree in information management will be offered on campus as well as online, drawing on the experience and infrastructure of our Leep online learning option. Students will be required to complete 40 credit hours, including three required courses:

- LIS 542: Data, Statistical Models, and Information;
- LIS 543: Sociotechnical Information Systems; and
- LIS 561: Information Modeling.

Students also will be able to choose electives in a range of areas, including privacy, trust, security, and ethics; data science and analytics; information architecture and design; and knowledge management and information consulting.

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**Related Documents**

- [Leading in the Future: An Expanded School Vision](#)
- [Statements of Support](#)
- [Proposal to Establish a New Master of Science in Information Management](#)