

UNIT REPORT

International Studies - APR Self-Study Report by Academic**Unit/Department**

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Program Mission

BA in International Studies Mission Statement

Program Mission Statement:

The International Studies Program (IS) at the University of Idaho serves the state of Idaho, supports the University's land-grant mission, and educates students to be well-informed on critical issues both to Idaho and the world. Its interdisciplinary approach provides a well-rounded education to students for future opportunities in government, non-governmental organizations, business, international organizations, education, and more. IS partners with the Martin Institute to provide every student with several transformational experiences, including but not limited to a trip to New York City in conjunction with the National Model UN Conference, an NGO visit providing exposure to professionals in the field, and an abroad experience. IS further develops critical competence in research projects peculiar to the field including position papers, research posters, and white papers, and exposes students to career paths through engagement with professionals and alumni.

Program Goal (add a minimum of 3 program goal "plan items")

1. Integration with the School of Global Studies (SGS)

Goal Statement:

Collaborate with partner units within the SGS to finalize and adopt the school bylaws and articulate areas of collaboration within the school.

Alignment to UI Strategic Plan Goals:

Cultivate (Goal 4): Foster an inclusive, diverse community of students, faculty, and staff and improve cohesion and morale.

Indicators/Metrics to Evaluate Progress:

Development of programs inclusive of IS in the SGS.

List of Actions the Program Will Take to Achieve Goals :

Join with other units to pass the bylaws. Work actively and constructively on integrated initiatives.

Goal Achievement Level: In Progress

2. Increase Enrollment

Goal Statement:

Primary majors with a BA in International Studies have decreased annually since 2017, from 101 to 60, for a variety of reasons. Our goal is to partner with campus, college, and School of Global Studies partners to reverse this trend.

Alignment to UI Strategic Plan Goals: Transform (Goal 3): Increase our educational impact.

Indicators/Metrics to Evaluate Progress:

Primary majors. At this point, it may be two years before the decline stops and we see a reversal of the trend.

List of Actions the Program Will Take to Achieve Goals :

We have already changed the curriculum to make it cleaner/clearer to students entering UI. We have considered adding a BS option but there is no appetite in partner departments for doing so. We will work with SEM on Spring 2022 visits to Idaho Falls/Pocatello and the Treasure Valley, and with CLASS to consider reaching out to students earlier in the admissions/recruitment pipeline.

Goal Achievement Level: In Progress

3. Be More Purposeful with Student Engagement with Department Events

Goal Statement:

We strongly encourage IS majors to be engaged with Martin Forum, Borah Symposium, and other programming opportunities. We will explore being more purposeful in doing so.

Alignment to UI Strategic Plan Goals:

Engage (Goal 2): Suggest and influence change that addresses societal needs and global issues, and advances economic development and culture.

Indicators/Metrics to Evaluate Progress:

An increase in the percent participation in the events (for those students not abroad). For the Borah Symposium, for example, increasing from this year's ~35% participation rate to at least two-thirds of IS majors directly engaged.

List of Actions the Program Will Take to Achieve Goals :

Include this in the retention plan being reviewed and revised in Spring 2022.

Goal Achievement Level: In Progress

4. Develop Alumni Career Database

Goal Statement:

We will hire an intern to conduct a study that will transform our heretofore ad hoc understanding of alumni career paths into a formalized one.

Alignment to UI Strategic Plan Goals: Transform (Goal 3): Increase our educational impact.

Indicators/Metrics to Evaluate Progress:

Production of the report.

List of Actions the Program Will Take to Achieve Goals :

We have already identified the person who will be our intern; they will start work in November 2021 with a completion goal of mid-April 2022.

Goal Achievement Level: In Progress

Student Learning Assessment Report (add one "plan item" for each major, degree, and/or certificate offered by dept)

International Studies BA

Assessment Report Contact: Bill L. Smith

Program Changes in Past Year:

The most significant revision to the IS degree since its establishment 30 years ago was put into place with the 2021-22 UI Catalog. This involves an expansion of issue emphasis options (our core three remain the same, with most majors and minors on campus now counting as well) and an increase in the number of IS@ credits required.

Learning Outcomes are Communicated to All Students in Program (check box if true): true

Learning Outcomes are Communicated to All Faculty (check box if true): true

Optional: Framework Alignment:

Import Outcomes Data (from Anthology Outcomes):

1.

Understanding of NGOs

Students can demonstrate an understanding of the role and importance of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in global governance and the major patterns of cooperation with states, intergovernmental organizations, businesses, and other civil society organizations.

Academic Year 2020-2021: International Studies (B.A.)

Term: **Overview**

No Results

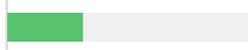
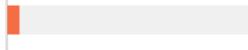
2.

International System

Students graduating with a BA in International Studies will demonstrate an understanding of how countries act and interact with each other in the international system through application of their individual domestic programs/foreign policies in intergovernmental organizations.

Academic Year 2020-2021: International Studies (B.A.)

Term: **Overview**

Exceeded		31.11%	14
Met		26.67%	12
Partially Met		37.78%	17
Not Met		4.44%	2

3.

Regional Knowledge

Students graduating with a BA in International Studies will demonstrate an understanding of major patterns in culture, geography, economics, and politics in their target region.

Academic Year 2020-2021: International Studies (B.A.)

Term: **Overview**

Exceeded		60%	18
Met		30%	9
Partially Met		0%	0
Not Met		10%	3

4.

Issue Knowledge

Students graduating with a BA in International Studies will demonstrate an understanding of major patterns in the way developed and developing nations, intergovernmental organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and/or business interests relate to their target issue emphasis.

Academic Year 2020-2021: **International Studies (B.A.)**Term: **Overview**

Exceeded		55.88%	19
Met		32.35%	11
Partially Met		0%	0
Not Met		11.76%	4

5.

Critical Thinking

Students graduating with a BA in International Studies will demonstrate evidence of critical thinking skills

Academic Year 2020-2021: **International Studies (B.A.)**Term: **Overview**

Exceeded		68.57%	24
Met		14.29%	5
Partially Met		17.14%	6
Not Met		0%	0

Summary of Student Learning:

Assessment data collected in this cycle continues a pattern wherein we observe a curriculum functioning well. Some of the numbers are almost certainly anomalies. For example, the 100% attainment of the goal for LO 2 in IS 320 stems from the significant additional time spent than normal on researching and writing the paper. This was possible because the usual time spent honing skills to be used at the National Model United Nations Conference was not needed - the conference was virtual - and we redirected that time. But we certainly hope not to replicate that again.

The six-year findings report shows most other measures falling into a similar range as past cycles.

We also look at several Graduating Senior Survey questions and then re-poll seniors following completion of the capstone course. Capstones matter in many fields, and even more so in our interdisciplinary program where so many things are tied together that the GSS - completed before more students even begin the capstone - does not adequately capture the indirect measure. In particular, we re-ask about "Knowledge of the evolution of economic, social, and political institutions" and "Knowledge of current international issues and problems."

Attached Files

[IS Six year benchmark to findings 2021.docx](#)

[Bonus GSS 2021.docx](#)

Summary of Faculty Discussion:

Our late May 2020 meeting to assess our assessment, plan, and review things was part of our biennial "deep dive" into our full plan; we're scheduled to do so again in 2022. You'll note the document below indicates the 2018 plan and 2020 update and actions; we'll do so again in 2022. We always look at our rolling six year findings report to see if anything needs immediate attention and to assess patterns in student performance.

We met in September 2020 and debated swapping out the heretofore first Learning Outcome - language acquisition, assessed already for shared students in the Modern Language Department - for a new one focused on Non-governmental Organizations. The NGO focus has the advantage of being something all IS majors study in common via IS 410, is a commonly-chosen career path, and is something we can assess ourselves while still having all IS students in French, German, and Spanish be assessed via the STAMP exam and included in assessment data by our colleagues.

We are concerned about the impact of key retirements in partner departments which deliver regional emphasis classes which, combined with many students unable to study abroad due to Covid, may impact performance on those measures. We know our curricular change may prove an unsatisfactory stopgap measure.

Attached Files

[IS Continuous Assessment Planning Review and Plan 2019-20.docx](#)

Summary of Changes/Improvements Being Considered:

While we won't do another deep dive into the data for another cycle, we have decided to add a sophomore/junior level assessment of LO 5 (critical thinking) to what we do in the capstone class. This will be done on an annual basis in a rotating set of classes offered by Professor Damann in the Fall term.

The coming cycle will be the first with information collected for LO 1.

Inter-rater Reliability:

Firstly, we have robust and detailed rubrics for each of our Learning Outcomes (we developed a new one for LO 1, so there's one for each now). Second, both with the three of us in IS and when alumni and/or teaching assistants lend a hand with assessment, we hold norming sessions which are detailed in the annual assessment materials. We struggle with how to norm adequately for oral presentations and have plans for post-mortem conversations in lieu of advance norming (these were planned for 2021 but not actualized).

Closing the Loop:

- The changes we put in place to improve partnerships and mentorship in IS 320 following the 2017-18 cycle continue to bear fruit. We have a similar number of very high-quality papers, with many fewer lower quality papers.
- We do find higher marks (anecdotally) for students with a second major tied to their issue emphasis rather than a mere emphasis, and have changed the curriculum to allow second majors in lieu of an issue emphasis. For example, previously a student could finish a major in Business but not have enough international business coursework to finish our emphasis. With ample international context provided by the spine of the IS degree, the business knowledge suffices.

Student Achievement

Academic Initiatives: Student Achievement

Student Retention:

We have a robust retention plan last updated in 2015-16 that has specific initiatives/efforts for each class year, for transfer students, and for everyone in the program. However, with the loss of our Program Advisor position two years ago, we have been operating on much more of an ad hoc basis than purposefully, and we need to update the plan with current staffing and programming in mind. We will do this in Spring 2022, and implement in 2022-23.

Student Persistence:

The unit does not actively monitor persistence, except to check the dashboard each year and feel confident we're doing okay. But we should be more pro-active.

The persistence rate in IS for the Fall 2020 cohort is 93.7% one term out, and 88.6% three terms out. These numbers are significantly better than UI as a whole, and slightly better than CLASS.

Student Completion:

IS has graduated 30+ people every year since 2009-10, even as the primary major count has decreased annually since 2012. With the reduced number of primary majors paralleling decreased numbers of degrees conferred at the UI over the same period, we are a bit chuffed at our consistently high rate of degree completion.

The data shows both what we assume is a higher-than-normal number of secondary majors in IS, and our support network for students bearing fruit.

Student Postgraduate Success:

The IS program benefits from an abnormally well connected alumni base, with nearly fifty alums directly involved in some aspect of the program in 2020-21 (this includes guest speaking, job talks, delivering workshops, serving on various boards, mentoring, and more). Program faculty met personally with nearly sixty alums over the course of that year. But while we're very good at purposefully engaging them and can rattle off what nearly everyone is doing, we lack a formal accounting thereof. We have hired an intern to build our first formal analysis of what our alums are doing, and anticipate having that report by the beginning of April.

Identify Equity Gaps:

For the most recent year there is data (2018-19) noting ethnicity of graduates, IS graduated 15 students in both the White/Unknown/International category and in the Under-represented Minority category. For the most recent year there is data (2020-21) noting gender of graduates, IS graduated 21 females and 15 males.

Effective Learning Environment and Closing Equity Gaps:

As noted above, our program tends to draw a relatively equitable group of students. We are also an equitable faculty and staff, and make these conversations a regular feature of our planning sessions. We speak to each other about individuals in the program, and seek peer mentors where an additional assist is needed for a student from a particular background.

Something we did a few years ago to improve the learning environment for first generation students was to move our New York trip from the senior year to the sophomore year. This was done to help prepare students to move abroad their junior year, as this group in particular lacked previous exposure to urban centers where many of the international programs are based, and traveling to New York City with department faculty (and with peers) was a good, mentored transition before sending them off solo which many reported was quite challenging.

Demand and Productivity

Academic Initiatives: Demand and Productivity

External Demand:

The combination of national political rhetoric disdainful of international engagement and multilateralism, and of the Covid-19 pandemic's negative impact on studying abroad, have impacted enrollment. Yet International Studies is self-identified as one of the two most common areas of interest by potential students in the SEM prospect/applicant/admit/enrollment funnel, so we know the potential for significant enrollment growth is there.

According to the APR dashboard, enrolled students each term are significantly higher than primary majors - more than twice the number in Fall 2021 (123 enrolled vs. 60 primary majors), indicating a broad external demand for our courses.

Internal Demand:

IS faculty teach in partner departments in addition to the home unit. Several IS classes fulfill the International Course requirement in General Education (10% of credits generated), and in 2021-22, we will be offering a dozen seats in our capstone class to Political Science majors. We offer a mix of in-person and online courses in a rough 60-40 split.

The IS minor is accepted in lieu of a second language or second major by both the French and Spanish majors.

Credit Productivity:

The APR Dashboard has different information than we do, even before considering teaching commitments for department faculty in other units. For example, we account for 464 IS credits delivered in S21 (see attachment), while the dashboard shows 334. Additionally, program faculty delivered 441 credit hours in PolS (243) and EnvS (198) in S21. We are confident in what we delivered as a good value proposition for the university and a good service to our students.

EDIT: subsequent visits to the dashboard produce different numbers, even with the same toggles flipped. The latest visit at 10:29 on 28 October shows 464 and matches our records, but just in case it re-sets again, I am leaving this commentary.

Attached Files

[IS Credit Hours S21.docx](#)

Financial Health and Resources

Academic Initiatives: Financial Health and Resources

Financial Health:

A major strength of the program is also a source of concern: the funding of a great many initiatives related to IS through the Martin Institute endowment, including salaries, speakers series, student travel, and the like. For almost 25 years, the partnership between the two has meant the IS degree functions akin to both similar program at a small liberal arts college, and one at a research university; it's dynamic and unique.

Two issues exist. First, the management of the IS degree program is moving away from the Institute and into the School of Global Studies, which ought to provide opportunities for synergy. But it may also mean the Institute directs funding elsewhere given changing priorities/demands. Second, the Institute was asked to absorb nearly \$70k of salary onto endowment funds starting with the 2020-21 fiscal year (which also pulled nearly \$20k more in benefits commitments onto the endowment as well). About \$20k has been returned, but that leaves a significant amount still on the Institute's budgets. What this means for the ability of the Institute to support the IS degree even if there are no changes from the shift in management to the SGS is unclear, but seems destined to impact it to some perhaps significant degree.

Staffing levels are good, no concerns there.

Efficient Use of Resources:

IS has no gift funds of its own, and a very small operating budget assigned to the Martin Institute. Salaries constitute the whole of specific, dedicated IS funding.