

A FOCUSED INTERIM REPORT

For the
Board of Regents

BA in International Studies

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA ANCHORAGE

Anchorage, Alaska
March, 2011

Submitted by the
International Studies Program, College of Arts and Sciences
University of Alaska Anchorage

**Focused Interim Report for the University of Alaska Anchorage
Bachelor of Arts in International Studies
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The College of Arts and Sciences **Bachelors of Arts in International Studies** is an interdisciplinary degree program with a core of broadly international courses that support upper-division tracks focusing on specific areas or issues. The current tracks have a regional concentration in Canada, Europe, Northeast Asia, or Russia. Full-time faculty and regularly-offered courses in the disciplines support the core requirements and the four tracks. Graduates develop basic proficiency in a foreign language, cross-cultural sensitivity, and a nuanced understanding of a particular region or issue through studies across disciplines.

International Studies Web site: <http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/intl/>

1. Enrollments and graduates:

Both enrollments and numbers of graduates exceed projections in the original 2006 proposal to the Board of Regents. UAA's Office of Institutional Research (IR) fall enrollment figures show a steady increase in majors. Over 80% of declared majors are in-state students.

	AY07-08	AY08-09	AY09-10	AY10-11
Projected Majors	1-5	5-10	10-15	did not project
Actual Majors (IR Fact Book)	15	48	65	85
Projected Graduates	0	0	1-5	did not project
Actual Graduates IR	1	4	14	13+ projected

2. Student Success:

The International Studies Program and its teaching faculty provide ongoing advising and mentoring for all majors. Student achievement has been recognized, and International Studies majors have received national and local awards, including the U.S. Department of State Critical Languages Scholarship, the national Phi Kappa Phi Study Abroad Scholarship, the Export Council of Alaska scholarship, the British Petroleum student scholarship for interns at the Washington Center, and the U.S. Agency for International Development Internship through American University's Washington Internships for Native Students (WINS). International Studies students are often selected as the UAA student delegates to the Student Conference on U.S. Affairs at West Point, and three majors won 2010-2011 Fulbright Scholarships, two of whom double majored in Languages. Current International Studies majors work for the Alaska World Affairs Council, the UAA Confucius Institute, and the UAA Honors College. Students have participated in local and national conferences, including the UAA Student Showcase, the national Heifer University Conference, and the Midwest Slavic Conference. This is just a sampling of student achievement within the program.

3. Revenues and expenditures

Revenues:	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10
	\$13,294.00	\$17,079.74	\$18,132.00	\$31,881.60

Expenditures:	FY 07	FY 08	FY 09	FY 10
	Expenses	Expenses	Expenses	Expenses
Personnel	\$0.00	\$68.72	\$10,009.63	\$ 10,458.32
Travel	\$913.00	\$1,300.00	\$3,481.66	\$4,016.84
Contractual	\$2,251.49	\$2,738.30	\$4,046.57	\$1,747.43
Commodities	\$1,769.38	\$ 4,161.48	\$ 4,427.00	\$2,932.42
Misc.	\$ 3,639.34	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00
Total Expense	<u>\$ 8,573.21</u>	<u>\$8,368.50</u>	<u>\$22,064.86</u>	<u>\$19,255.01</u>

The program was funded by the College of Arts and Sciences using existing resources for International Studies. Major expenses include the program chair's compensation and a part-time staff person. No new tenure track or full-time faculty members were hired to implement the program, which is taught by faculty already at UAA. An adjunct replacement is hired to cover the one course release per academic year for the chair. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of the degree, the program takes maximum advantage of existing, regularly-offered, disciplinary courses.

4. Adequacy and availability of library resources

All UAA students have access to the full suite of library services, many of which are available on line (see: <http://www.lib.uaa.alaska.edu/>). Collections in Russia/Russian Far East, Northeast Asia and Canada have been enhanced over the past ten years, in part as a complement to the activities of two Department of Education Title VIA Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Languages grants, as well as grants from the Canadian government. Faculty members in the disciplines review and update the collections in their specific areas.

5. Adequacy and availability of student support services

The Program is particularly proud of its efforts in the area of advising. It has developed a student-centered Web site, as well as a comprehensive advising packet for all incoming majors. The Program brings events and opportunities to the attention of the majors through an e-mail list. The Chair holds approximately five to eight office hours per week, with an additional several hours each week of detailed advising by e-mail. The Program works closely with the Student Success Coordinator in the College of Arts and Sciences, as well as the Office of International Affairs for study abroad and the Center for Community Engagement and Learning for community connections.

6. Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

Student learning is the top priority of the program, and the International Studies embraces assessment and program improvement. The outcomes assessment plan is in its third version, with revisions in both the outcomes and the assessment methods. The plan itself has been rated highly by the summer program assessment review committee.

Mission: The International Studies program at UAA prepares students to be global citizens in an interdependent world. International and intercultural understanding and competency are essential in all aspects of life and work, and this program seeks to prepare students to be contributing members of the international community.

Student Learning Outcomes: At the completion of this program, students are able to demonstrate cross-cultural understanding through language study, demonstrate critical thinking about values, attitudes, and practices in an international context, demonstrate a multi-perspective understanding of a specific area (Canada, Europe, Russia, Northeast Asia), and demonstrate effective written communication.

Learning Outcomes Assessment: Student learning outcomes are assessed at three critical junctures within the degree: the fourth year language course, the required upper-division track course, and the degree capstone course. Linguistic and cultural proficiency are measured through pro-chievement testing in the fourth semester language course, and critical thinking and analytical writing, as well as content knowledge, are assessed in the track and capstone courses.

7. Student satisfaction

The International Studies Program will institute an annual student satisfaction survey in 2011-2012. The following are responses from International Studies graduating seniors and graduates to a brief ad hoc survey sent out in March, 2011:

Sharity Sommer (May, 2009)

After graduating, Sharity participated in the First Alaskans Institute internship program as an intern in communications at the Rasmuson Foundation. After the internship, she traveled to Europe and volunteered with Habitat for Humanity in Kenya. She became full-time at the Rasmuson Foundation, working in both communications and grant management.

“The UAA International Studies Program has been a great asset to me personally and professionally. It allows students to tailor their degree so that it suits their interest areas. For example, I’m interested in Political Science and was able to have PS courses with an international focus count towards my degree. I enjoyed taking courses in a broad range of subjects, such as History, Political Science, and Languages. Many of the courses in the program are writing intensive, which has been a tremendous asset to me professionally.”

Jacquelynn Engebretson (May, 2010)

Jackie participated in American University’s Washington Internships for Native Students (WINS), through which she served as an intern at the U.S. Agency for International Aid (USAID) while taking a Federal Indian Policy course. After the internship she worked on a federal contract with the Department of Labor.

“I greatly enjoyed UAA’s International Studies Program. It allowed me to study things I was truly interested in, which in my case included a greater emphasis on history classes. The interdisciplinary program was truly spectacular. Furthermore, the guidance I received, from the professors to my advisor. I was able to learn about excellent opportunities, both with UAA and beyond.”

Dayana Hankins (May, 2010)

http://greenandgold.uaa.alaska.edu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6586

Dayana always felt it was important to be a good student. She was constantly working to overcome her language barrier and spent lots of time with her professors. “I would try to learn and understand their passion for the subject they taught,” she said. “Graduating cum laude from UAA was one of the greatest accomplishments of my life. UAA is my alma mater and the place in which I found my real inspiration in life.”

Joel Hebert (May, 2010)

Joel has been accepted into the History PhD program at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill with full support for 5 years, including three summer research fellowships. He is especially excited by the opportunity to spend time at King's College London through the UNC graduate exchange program .

“In my opinion, the biggest tangible strength of International Studies is its interdisciplinarity. I was vaguely conscious of this at the time I was going through the program (owing to the fact that I could satisfy my degree requirements without sacrificing my varied interests in English, History, Political Science, and other disciplines), but this became fully apparent to me when I started conversing with potential advisors at grad

schools and filling out applications. The fact that my transcript showed a range of interests turned out to be (I believe) a strength in their eyes - not a weakness. The language component of the degree was also key. I quickly learned that having competency in a foreign language removed a central and important barrier to many graduate programs.

The other key aspect of the International Studies program is the faculty. As an IS major, instead of being cloistered in one department, you have the benefit of being exposed to a wide array of the most talented faculty that UAA has to offer.”

Meredith Overstreet (May, 2010)

Meredith is currently working towards a Masters in Sustainability and Environmental Management through Harvard's Extension School while supporting herself as a Marine Science Technician with the Coast Guard Reserves.

“While the degree itself is somewhat generic when trying to find your niche in the work place, I've found it incredibly useful in making me an all around better more educated member of society. Perspectives gained through the International Studies program set me up perfectly to tackle the all encompassing global issues of environmental management. Overall, I have been very pleased with the educational background completing the degree has afforded me.”

Breana Walters (August, 2010)

Breana is currently sailing around the world on a 30-foot sailboat. She plans to return to Alaska this summer.

“I have nothing but good things to say about the International Studies department. The classes have taught me to embrace differing cultures and seek out new experiences. The advisors made the degree requirements easy to understand which helped me to glide through my years, rather than cram my required classes into my senior year. The professors inspired me to do what I am doing today, travel, which helps me further my education and stretch my limits as a person.”

Eric Nilan (May, 2011)

Eric plans to work for the USGS doing glacial mapping in the immediate future. He has a job offer to work in a tourist/non-profit job in Uganda. After several years of field experience he would like to return to school for a masters degree in International Studies, and possibly work for a larger international organization after that.

“I really enjoyed the program, and all the classes that I took. I like the flexibility of the classes that were offered. My advisor was a great help in getting me on track to graduate, and help me get scholarships. Although the program is new, it is multidisciplinary in nature and it seems to be comparable to other schools. Maybe offering a focus of study in several more regions of world would be an improvement. I really liked living in a different environment, and I think UAA is great place to study. It has definitely helped me to see the world in a different way, and broadened my understanding of global systems.”

8. Blackboard

The required introductory course GEOG A101/INTL A101 Local Places/Global Regions: An Introduction to Geography is offered by e-learning in the fall, spring, and summer. The core courses PS A102 Introduction to Political Science, PHIL A313 Eastern Philosophy and Religion, PHIL A212 History of Philosophy II, and ENGL A202 Masterpieces in World Literature II are offered by e-learning in some semesters. Several instructors use Blackboard as a resources tool for on-campus classes.

9. Faculty

The program is delivered by expert full-time faculty, a core group of which created the curriculum and continues to oversee it. The Chair coordinates with faculty across disciplines and works with the International Studies Curriculum Committee on scheduling, curricular coherence, student petitions, and outcomes

assessment. Courses are part of the regular disciplinary offerings. Some of the lower-division courses in the core curriculum, particularly General Education Requirements with multiple sections, are delivered by qualified adjuncts.

10. Facilities and Technology

The International Studies degree is delivered on the UAA Anchorage campus using existing classrooms and the language and geography laboratories. There is a new language teaching lab/classroom. Some classes, including the required introductory survey GEOG 101/INTL 101 are offered as distance courses.

11. Program Graduates

Some information about graduates is included in the Student Satisfaction section above. The International Studies Program will institute an annual alumni survey in 2011-2012.