

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**  
**Academic Program Review**

**International Studies**

**EXTERNAL REVIEWERS**

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**CAMPUS VISIT:**

April 7-9, 2010.

The review team read the self-study written by the faculty in the department; reviewed the curriculum, course syllabi and evaluations; conducted class visits; interviewed faculty, students and staff; and met with the Dean, Associate Deans and other relevant members of the campus community. Prior to their visit, the reviewers were provided with USF's Vision, Mission, Values Statement, the department's self-study and other university materials.

- 1. How did the external review committee rate the quality of the program – excellent, very good, good, adequate, or poor? How does the program compare with benchmark top-tier programs nationally? Please provide a brief rationale for the external review committee's rating.**
  - The reviewers rated the International Studies program as 'very good'.
  - In only four years, a challenging and stimulating major has been created that is taught by quality faculty teaching diverse, interdisciplinary courses.
  - The review team was "very impressed" with the program as it stands but they believed that its current model is unsustainable.
  
- 2. What are the most important general issues that emerged from the external review process?**
  - The program "lacks certain essential resources" and has reached a critical size (around 265 undergraduate majors).
  - The program needs "to be place on a more sustainable course".
  
- 3. What specific recommendations for improving the program's quality has the external review committee made to the Dean?**

General

- Since the review team felt that there was no discernable end in sight to the growth of the IS major, there needs to be some discussion between the administration and the program about the "size of the major" question.
- Students lack continuity in advising and, since there is no departmental home, do not have "a place to belong".

- The review team encouraged the program to seek a diversity of perspectives and noted that most of the workload is handled by relatively junior female faculty.

#### Curriculum and Instruction

- There is a gap in the curriculum with regard to research methods/quantitative methods. While there is no single model to follow for IS, more emphasis on methods would help students in their careers. Such a requirement might also have the effect of slowing down the growth of majors.
- The IS program needs a honors ‘capstone’ experience especially for IS majors (similar to the Politics honors course) that would be selective and involve independent research.
- The reviewers endorsed both the current attempt to revamp the World Religions track and the continuation of the environmental track. However, the most popular tracks have gateway courses while World Religions and Environment do not. The review team recommended creating 2 unit (half semester) gateway courses into these two tracks.
- Undergraduate students need more career information about the choices available to them (possibly through wider faculty advising and informal talks by MA students on their internships and work experience).
- There needs to be a discussion about how International Studies connects to the “related disciplines” and what makes it unique in order to bring some self clarification as to what faculty value in the program and how the program relates to other disciplines.
- Study abroad is absolutely essential for IS majors and the program should make 100% participation in study abroad one of its goals. Faculty also need to be involved in study abroad in terms of advising, consultation and guidance.

#### Faculty

- The reviewers recommended the creation of an institute or center for the IS program. The center could address advising and programming needs while also giving students a collective identity and affiliation on campus.
- Departments across campus need to be sensitive to the fact that IS cannot hire its own faculty and relies on their goodwill to accommodate its needs.
- The Dean’s Office needs to intervene to ensure that the relevant departments offer enough IS gateway courses. Ensuring that there are enough of these courses would improve planning for the major.

#### Resources and Structure

- The review team recommended creation of a Center for International and Regional Studies with a director responsible for co-ordination and fundraising. Regional minors would also be placed under the Center and its main role would be “to foster a sense of community amongst IS students.”
- The website needs to be completely redesigned to address FAQs, events, program structure, faculty, forms, etc.
- An alumni list serve would also be of advantage to the program.

#### **4. In the opinion of the external review committee is the program following the University’s strategic initiative in that it is;**

*Recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty of outstanding teachers and scholars.*

- The review team was “very impressed” with the quality of the faculty and noted their commitment and concern. Students had a high regard for the faculty.
- The faculty should be encouraged to collaborate across departmental lines in order to further the mission and goals of the program.

*Enrolling, supporting and graduating a diverse student body that demonstrates high academic achievement, strong leadership capabilities, a concern for others, and a sense of responsibility for the weak and vulnerable.*

- Students were “outspoken in their love of the major” and the reviewers did not receive significantly negative comments.

*Providing the environment necessary to promote student learning in the program.*

- The review team noted that the IS major appears to be challenging and stimulating and seems to be one of the toughest majors in the College of Arts and Sciences.
- The impressive growth of the program is a testament to the quality of the program.

**5. In what way is the program contributing to the goal of making the University of San Francisco a premier Jesuit, Catholic urban university with a global perspective that educates leaders who will fashion a more humane and just world?**

- The review team observed “the IS major advances the mission and goals of the University in scope and curriculum.”
- Furthermore, the reviewers noted that “there does not seem to be any tension between the major’s curriculum and the mission and goals of the university.”

**6. What is the timetable for the response to the external review committee’s recommendations for program improvement? What can the Office of the Provost do to appropriately respond to the review?**

- Work with the program to set up a sustainable and long-term administrative structure.
- Explore the issue of whether either departmental status or a Center of International and Regional Studies are feasible.
- Work to ensure that all students have access to international immersion programs.

**7. What general comments or issues, if any, are crucial to understanding the reviewers report?**

- The reviewers were felt that “the issue of organization” is the main question that needs attention.
- They believed that the creation of a center would bring together IS, regional programs and the MAIS into one geographical space.

