The Program Review Committee’s report on the International Studies Program highlights the great success the program has enjoyed during the past five years and suggests the potential it has for serving as a catalyst for helping the University recruit and serve students who wish to develop an international perspective, better understand global issues, and learn about and experience other cultures. The curriculum has been revised, introductory and capstone courses have been developed, enrollment has grown impressively, student participation in study abroad experiences has increased, advising has been enhanced, and the groundwork laid for the Global Village, a residential learning community. The program’s success has clearly helped strengthen the University’s emphasis on “Understanding Cultures and Nations”—one of the five themes of the Academic Plan.

These gains have been made through the leadership of a very energetic director who has been successful in gaining the support of a group of dedicated, knowledgeable, and talented faculty from a number of departments. The success the International Studies Program has truly been a community effort and has occurred because of remarkable collaboration.

There are, of course, important issues that must be addressed if we are to fully realize the potential of the International Studies Program. The two main issues we face—as identified in the PRC’s report—are resources and rationalizing the administrative structure for international academic programs and study abroad programs (which are integral to the International Studies Program and the language departments, the key elements of our international academic programs).

In her response to the PRC’s report, Dr. Kristie Foell offers several updates on the progress of her program in achieving its goals and offers correctives to several statements included in the report. Notably, she emphasizes that the collaboration between the Center for International Programs and the International Studies Program in providing leadership for the Global Village is highly functional, even if these units report to different deans and vice presidents. Dr. Foell makes a compelling case. She also voices skepticism about combining International Studies and International Programs—calling attention to their very different responsibilities and orientations. However, she warmly endorses efforts to provide better coordination of matters international and return oversight of AYA programs to their academic homes. Generally, however, she supports the PRC’s recommendations.

I accept the recommendations contained in the PRC’s final report with the following stipulations:

1. The College has and will continue to work with the leadership of the International Studies Program, the Center for International Programs, and the Residential Learning Communities Advisory Committee to successfully launch the Global Village in August 2007. This initiative holds great promise for attracting more students interested in
international study and advancing the Academic Plan’s emphasis on “Understanding Cultures and Nations.”

2. I endorse formation of a task force that would develop a model for better organizing and coordinating our international academic resources. I would emphasize that while these lie in several colleges, the principal academic international programs are in the College of Arts & Sciences: the Department of German, Russian, East Asian Languages, the International Studies Program, and the Department of Romance Languages. If we truly wish to expand international study, we should not lose sight of this reality. It is also important to recognize that the largest study abroad programs reside within the two language departments. Continuing and Extended Education has budget authority over study abroad programs—including the three big AYA programs—and its dean, Dr. William Balzer, has worked closely with me and the language department chairs to assure that the academic units have a voice in decision-making. While this system may prove workable, we should be open to other approaches that might better promote international study, serve students, and recruit additional students with an international studies orientation. BGSU’s resources in international study are superb, and we should create organizational structures that allow us to make the most of them.

3. The College has provided release time to a tenured faculty member to assist with advising, thereby providing high-level assistance to the Director in a critical area. We are committed to continuing this. The College will also continue to assess staffing needs of the program and try to provide additional support, although existing resource constraints make that challenging. I will work with the acting director of the program in the coming year to develop a plan to prioritize staffing needs and to identify resources to meet the most pressing needs.

4. While the College has hired an instructor who will split her time evenly between International Programs and American Culture Studies, I acknowledge the importance of developing tenured or tenure track joint appointments for International Studies. I will work with the acting director during the coming year to identify possible joint appointments of existing tenured faculty members who have demonstrated a strong interest in and commitment to the program.

5. Developing a more robust program of assessment is critical. I will ask Associate Dean Simon Morgan-Russell to work with the acting director of the program to address this need during the 2006-07 academic year.

I congratulate Dr. Foell and her colleagues for their hard work and success and pledge to continue to work with them to strengthen the program so that it continues to be a driver in the growth of international study at BGSU.

Donald G. Nieman, Dean

Date
Concurred:

____________________________________  __________________
John W. Folkins, Provost                          Date