Unit Response to Program Review Committee Report for International Studies

The International Studies Program would like to acknowledge the excellent work of the Provost/VPAA’s office and the Program Review Committee in guiding us through this process, setting up arrangements for external reviewers, and communicating effectively at every step of the way. Our special appreciation is extended to our PRC liaison, who dedicated time to arrange and attend meetings above and beyond the call of duty in an effort to better understand the circumstances of this program.

We appreciate the positive feedback from the external reviewers and from the PRC; it is gratifying to have successes acknowledged in this way. At the same time, we concur in the spirit of the various suggestions for strengthening the program, though some of the details may need to be discussed. The purposes of this response are, therefore, to correct some minor misperceptions, update information that has changed since the review process began, and offer our informed opinion about the most productive ways to proceed from here. The following comments follow the format of the PRC Report.

**SUMMARY OF THE SELF STUDY**

**Introduction**

**Description of Unit**

We have no comments or clarifications on these sections.

**Self Evaluation**

We have no comments or clarifications on these sections.

**Unit Planning (next seven years) (p. 8 of PRC Report)**

This is in the nature of an update: we are in the fortunate position that a number of the 2003 goals, listed as “not yet met” in the fall self-study, have now been met, or partially met, specifically:

“Confirm one internal joint appointment with another department”: as of fall 2006, Dr. Lucy Long will join the staff as an instructor on a three-year joint appointment with ACS. While this is not yet the tenure-track appointment with a traditional department that we had envisioned, it is a step in the right direction.

“Increase the number of majors to 80.” Although the headcount was 75 when the self-study was submitted, there were 90 majors as of April 2006. Goal met and exceeded!

“International living-learning community”: with Global Village scheduled to launch in Fall 2007, we are on track to achieve this goal within the envisioned time frame.

**SUMMARY OF THE EXTERNAL REPORT**

We greatly enjoyed and benefited from the energetic presence of the external reviewers, as well as their positive comments on the program and specifically on the Global Village proposal. We do think they may have slightly misapprehended and exaggerated the role of Global Village in overcoming the A&S/CEE divide, however. Following are some sentences taken from the summary with our corrective responses:

From p. 8: “They [external reviewers] support the idea of co-directors for the International Studies Program and the International Programs (i.e. Study Abroad), to both be placed under the College of Arts and Sciences.”
There are two misconceptions here:

1) International Programs includes both Study Abroad and services to international students and scholars. The Director of the Center for International Programs, proposed as Global Village co-director from CEE, is on the “international students” side; this is by design, as international students are half the proposed clientele of the Global Village. The Education Abroad office is also a component of CIP, but will not be directly connected to Global Village.

2) Global Village will be a joint venture between CIP and Arts and Sciences; each director has his/her own reporting line in CEE or A&S, respectively. We hope this collaboration will increase communication on international matters of common interest, but the Global Village as proposed does not decisively belong in one area or the other. The Residential Learning Communities Advisory Committee, composed of individuals from A&S, the Provost’s office, and student affairs, approves new learning communities but is also not a direct reporting line. The current view is that living-learning communities report both to the appropriate dean(s) and to the provost.

Also from p. 8: “The external reviewers believe that if the two programs are combined, the Global Village will overcome the disconnect problem currently imposed on both programs and will provide one place for students to learn and prepare for study abroad. The reviewers suggested a new title for the combined programs, The Center for International Education.”

As indicated above, Global Village may offer a model of collaboration between the two areas, but it does not seek to collapse them. It has no connection to study abroad. As part of the process of developing Global Village, we have discussed placing it physically in the same space as CIP—both the international student and study abroad components—but this seems unlikely in the near future due to space constraints (specifically the loss of Saddlemire in summer 2007, which creates a space crunch for numerous programs currently housed there). We fully endorse a future university-wide center for international education as a goal, however, and would be pleased if Global Village turns out to be the first step on the path towards such an entity!

PROGRAM REVIEW COMMITTEE
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS


As recommended, we are continuing with the plans for Global Village. Due to some recent reorganization and personnel shifts in CEE/CIP, it is unclear at this time whether the former or current Director of CIP will serve as co-director or whether some other arrangement may be more appropriate. Close cooperation with CIP as the contact point for incoming international students, and especially as housing liaison for undergraduate international students, will be essential to the success of Global Village.
2. Reorganization of International Studies and the Study Abroad Program.

The following paragraph, quoted from p. 10, requires some comment:

“Members of the International Studies Program Advisory Board noted that the current structure is inefficient and has communication gaps. Subsequently, the [Program Review] Committee discussed the potential for centralization of the two functional areas with administrators at CEE, who indicated that a 2004 internal audit and subsequent discussions among relevant administrators noted the need for better record-keeping for the AYA programs. They believe the current division of academic and budgetary controls appears to work best in that regard. The internal audit indicates that there were financial record-keeping problems before CEE added controls on AYA budgets.”

We believe that the comments from CEE administrators misrepresent the situation. While it is true that there were “financial record-keeping problems” in some education abroad programs (not primarily the AYA programs proper), the main responsibility for this was clearly laid at the doorstep of CEE itself, which for ten years took no initiative to update guidelines or procedures. The audit report states, “We were unable to find evidence that CEE was performing any review of accounting transactions or reconciliation of financial activities associated with cash advances or University funds in foreign bank accounts” (16). The original initiative for instituting new controls and procedures came from the March 2005 internal auditor’s report, not from CEE. The fact that CEE is now adding “controls on AYA budgets” is a sign that they are finally doing their job, not that the AYA or other education abroad programs were out of line and need to be controlled by CEE, as their comments seem to imply. In fact the auditor’s report clearly states that “nothing came to our attention indicating that there was evidence of material fraud or misuse of University assets” (4). Thus the impression given by CEE administrators that the current division is necessary in order to keep tabs on the finances of education abroad programs is false.

Points 1-5 on pages 10-11 raise excellent questions that will need to be considered as we proceed. At this time, we have the following general comments:

Point 1 asks, “Would there be two directors housed under one central program or will there be one director in control of both the International Studies Program and International Programs?” Although these issues are being raised in connection with the International Studies program review, considering a combination of International Studies and International Programs may not necessarily be the best way to proceed. Rather, what is needed is a clearinghouse for all matters international, and return of academic programs (such as study abroad) to the control of academic areas.

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1 The full title of the report is “Internal Auditor’s Report on Education Abroad Program, Department of Continuing and Extended Education,” authored by Bahram Hatefi, Director, Internal Auditing and Advisory Services, BGSU, dated March 22, 2005. All page references refer to this report. The distribution page of the report indicates that “this report is a matter of public record” under the Ohio Revised Code and the Freedom of Information Act (specific citations in the report).
Point 5 asks, “Where will responsibility for incoming foreign students reside?” One possible answer to this would be to move this to Student Affairs, as this is primarily a service provided to students. On the other hand, recruitment of a sufficient quantity, quality, and variety of international students does have a direct bearing on the academic environment at BGSU, particularly in the context of an endeavor such as Global Village.

We concur in the following recommendation (from p. 11), with one caveat:

**Recommendation.** The Committee asks that the offices of the Provost and the Executive Vice President continue to work together toward functional and administrative reorganization of International Studies and Study Abroad, with an eye toward consolidation of the two functional areas and AYA programs generally. The Committee suggests that any reorganization effort would be aided by input from the directors of both programs and related faculty and administrators.

The Committee recommends that the Provost and Executive Vice President appoint and charge a committee or task force to study organization, coordination, effectiveness, and efficiency of our diverse programs in international education. We suggest that the committee’s report should be completed by the beginning of fall term, 2008, and include a five-year strategic plan for programs in international education.

Comment: we think that the second paragraph, addressing issues involving “our diverse programs in international education,” is more to the point than the first paragraph, which recommends “functional and administrative reorganization of International Studies and Study Abroad.” International Studies as a program does not need to be reorganized; it is how the various parts of the international puzzle fit together that concerns us.

3. **Staffing and Budgeting Issues.**

We appreciate the PRC’s recognition that there are increased staffing needs in International Studies, as well as their sensitivity towards the need to negotiate any added positions with the Dean of A&S. We agree that “It may be that there are alternative schemes that will provide the necessary services to students without straining the current resources available to the program” (p. 11). However, we do not endorse the specific example given, “adding advisors from the pool of instructors to aid the Director in advising duties.” This solution has been discussed and rejected twice in the past year: the advisory committee feels strongly that student advising should be done by tenured/tenure-track faculty; and negotiations for our recent instructor hire specifically excluded student advising from her duties. But there are many creative solutions, including the possibility of converting existing tenured lines to joint appointments.

4. **Instructional Issues.** We concur with all recommendations in this section.

5. **Assessment.** We also concur with, and are taking action on, these recommendations.