

# REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE TO REVIEW INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS (IP)

February 2025

## INTRODUCTION

The University of Iowa (UI) Policy Manual requires that reviews of colleges and programs be conducted regularly, and when judged appropriate, the internal review can be limited and focused. In accordance with this operating procedure, UI Executive Vice President and Provost Kevin Kregel formed the Ad Hoc Committee to Review International Programs (“the Review Committee”) and charged it to conduct a focused review of International Programs (IP) and to prepare this report. The Review Committee members are listed in **Appendix A**.

## CHARGE FOR FOCUSED REVIEW

International Programs and the Review Committee were asked to address the following focus areas in the self-study and review report:

1. Has the program:
  - a. Developed programming for international students?
  - b. Developed additional global partnerships?
  - c. Worked with colleges to support/enhance their programs?
  - d. Further developed global programming on campus?
  - e. Identified strategies for increasing international student enrollment?
2. Review the program’s investment in strategic partnerships and the return on that investment.
3. Review the program’s 5-year budget and the impact of the strategic partnerships as noted above.

## MATERIALS CONSULTED AND INDIVIDUALS/GROUPS INTERVIEWED

Materials used to inform the Review Committee included the provost’s charge for the review and IP’s self-study. Individuals and groups interviewed were selected by the Provost’s Office and included UI leadership, individuals from IP, and its affiliated units. Interviews were conducted via Zoom on February 18 and 19, 2025. A full list of those interviewed are listed in **Appendix B**.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Strengths

- Communication with stakeholders is transparent and timely, particularly regarding evolving regulatory and policy developments.
- Collaboration is robust within the unit and with partners across the institution.
- Interviewed stakeholders reported that the unit is positively receptive to feedback and new ideas.
- Interviewed students reported that IP staff and Dean Ganim are approachable and supportive, and services such as virtual advising are easily accessible.
- The newly established U.S. Passport Acceptance Facility has proven to be an essential asset to both the institution and the community.
- The International Student Advisory Board stands out as an exceptional leadership model within a service unit.

### Opportunities and Future Directions

- Better define IP’s role within the UI Strategic Student Recruitment Plan.

- Increase institutional support for technology resources, including cloud-based software solutions that meet the unique needs of an international education office to better facilitate international agreements and manage study abroad data and applications.
- Establish stronger institutional infrastructure to welcome scholars from abroad, including support for collegiate hosting, housing resources, and a formalized communication structure to share when scholars arrive.
- Develop an intentional succession plan for high-level leadership roles.
- Highlight career progression and leadership opportunities for staff, both within the unit and institutionally, to further build institutional knowledge within IP.
- Continue to develop opportunities to engage faculty in the unit's regular operations as a strategy to educate and foster future leadership.
- Create an active repository for data, documentation, and protocols for the benefit of current and future IP team members and leaders as well as for the nine faculty-led affinity group leaders.
- Deepen collaborative relationships between the Office of the Vice President for Research and IP (e.g., engaging with the Institutional Review Board) to further support international research.
- Continue to develop communication and timely process improvement strategies between IP and Admissions and Enrollment Services (e.g., assessing the timing of when international students can register for classes in relation to domestic students).
- Identify and vet relationship opportunities between the institution and international partners, including UI alumni.
- Lead the institution on innovative strategies for increased international student enrollment/retention and the recruitment/retention of international faculty and scholars.

## **SPECIFIC AREAS OF FOCUS**

### **1.a. Has IP developed programming for international students?**

IP has developed extensive academic and social programming to help acclimate international students to UI and the community, including prearrival webinars, orientation activities, mentoring programs, and cultural events. Students report that orientation programming has been particularly important to their success, and services such as International Student Services drop-in hours are readily accessible. Optional Practical Training and Curricular Practical Training workshops provide further educational opportunities post-graduation. IP organizes several initiatives that combine social and academic support, including the opportunity to participate in International Student Advisory Board meetings, peer assistance workshops, and a popular weekly coffee hour where guest speakers discuss a variety of relevant themes.

### **1.b. Has IP developed additional global partnerships?**

IP has over 150 active Memoranda of Understanding with institutions abroad, with a primary goal of developing substantive partnerships that promote ongoing research and teaching opportunities for students and faculty. These expansive efforts have resulted in new collaborations, including, but not limited to, partnerships in South and sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and India. IP leaders expressed an intent to further expand collaborations in Latin America, starting in Uruguay in collaboration with the Obermann Center. Through webinars like the Virtual Speed Networking Event, students and faculty can identify potential avenues for collaboration that best suit their academic interests, though further efforts within the unit to identify and vet opportunities—especially through alumni—could be beneficial.

### **1.c. Has IP worked with colleges to support/enhance their programs?**

IP's successful partnerships with several UI colleges have resulted in new academic programs, research opportunities, and global initiatives. Notable examples include the Mandela Washington Fellows program, co-sponsored with the Tippie Institute for International Business and the highly impactful Kosovo Project in affiliation with the College of Law, College of Education, and Tippie College of Business.

### **1.d. Has IP further developed global programming on campus?**

Faculty described IP as the most robust support system on campus for international research and professional success. In addition to sponsoring opportunities such as the Provost Global Forums and the Building Our Global Community Series, stakeholders also noted the critical support IP performs behind the scenes, including assistance with applying for visas and other bureaucratic processes. The Study Abroad Office provides students with essential pre-departure and reentry programming, while international faculty and scholars receive a variety of onboarding and faculty success opportunities via webinars and in-person workshops.

### **1.e. Has IP identified strategies for increasing international student enrollment?**

IP leaders are cognizant of growing challenges related to international student enrollment, as well as the ethical dilemmas involved in bringing graduate students to the institution without guaranteed multi-year support funding. IP is currently pursuing outreach and recruitment strategies within international secondary schools to tap into new geographic markets to grow enrollment e.g., the Middle East and Africa). In Latin America, there is a focus on developing research collaboration opportunities that showcase the UI's strength in the arts, particularly with the UI Master of Fine Arts program in Spanish Creative Writing and the UI Department of Dance. Outreach to international students currently studying in US high schools (particularly Washington, California, and Colorado) has also created a recruitment pipeline with strong potential to produce a significant flow of students from international secondary schools.

One recurring theme that emerged in interviews was the uncertainty of who owns the space for recruitment of students, especially international graduate students, at the institution (i.e., the department, the college, Admissions, Enrollment Management, or IP). It would be beneficial to examine what gaps are created in the UI Strategic Plan in this regard and establish clear communication protocols between these areas.

## **2. Review the program's investment in strategic partnerships and the return on that investment.**

The services IP provides to the institution yield significant intangible returns through strategic partnerships, such as increased global visibility and relevance as an internationally known R1 university. IP's efforts have helped the UI achieve a reputation as a top producer of Fulbright awardees. Evidence of direct monetary contribution includes the support IP provides to faculty in obtaining grants that have led to additional external funding and enhanced research. IP's philanthropic partnership with the UI Center for Advancement has also developed a strong track record of scholarships for students studying abroad.

## **3. Review the program's 5-year budget and the impact of the strategic partnerships as noted above.**

IP leadership is very conscious of the institution's current financial landscape, and it has been prudent in allocating resources responsibly and with maximum impact. A detailed review of the 5-year budget illustrates how the judicious stewardship of funds strengthened the unit's ability to rebound from the Covid-19 pandemic, leading to a much stronger financial position as a result. With the support of the UI Center for Advancement and the Stanley Foundation, IP's fundraising efforts are proving impressively successful. IP has also developed a new revenue stream through the establishment of the University of Iowa U.S. Passport Office. Further

investment in technology resources will help the unit make gains in productivity and efficiency and ultimately become more financially self-sufficient.

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#### **Appendix A. Members of the Review Committee**

- Luis Martín-Estudillo, Director, Obermann Center for Advanced Studies and Professor, Department of Spanish and Portuguese, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, UI—Review Committee Chair
- Lois Gray, Director, Office of Strategic Communications, College of Education, UI
- Charles Keene, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Programs and Professor of Instruction, Marketing, Tippie College of Business, UI
- Anita Nicholson, Clinical Professor, College of Nursing, UI
- Diego Rodriguez, Director, Multicultural and International Student Support and Engagement, Division of Student Life, UI
- Suzanne Stratton, Director, Finance & Budget Operations, Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost, UI
- Reitemetse Obakeng Mabokela, Associate Chancellor and Vice Provost for Global Affairs & Strategies and Professor, Education Policy, Organization and Leadership, Office of the Chancellor & Office of the Provost, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign—External Reviewer

#### **Appendix B. Individuals Interviewed by the Review Committee**

Russell Ganim, Associate Provost and Dean, International Programs

##### **Deans**

Jill Kolesar, Dean, College of Pharmacy

Amy Kristof-Brown, Henry B. Tippie Dean, Tippie College of Business

Edith Parker, Dean, College of Public Health

##### **Institutional Leadership**

Jeneane Beck, Assistant Vice President for External Relations

Becky Hanson, Associate Director, International Outreach and Recruitment

Liz Tovar, Executive Officer and Associate VP, Division of Access, Opportunity, and Diversity

##### **International Programs Leadership Team**

Michael Bortscheller, Director, International Student & Scholar Services

Amy Brewster, Director of Operations

Ann Knudson, Grants Administrator

Mary Paterson, Business Manager

Katie Ron, Director, Communications & Relations

Autumn Tallman, Director, Study Abroad, Health, Safety, and Risk Management

Karen Wachsmuth, Associate Director, International Fellowships

Liz Wildenberg de Hernandez, Director, Study Abroad, Programs and Services

##### **International Programs Faculty Advisory Council**

Shelly Campo, Graduate College

Daniel Caplan, Preventive & Community Dentistry

Dimy Doresca, Management & Organizations  
Meenakshi Gigi Durham, Journalism & Mass Communication/Ombuds  
Gary Milavetz, College of Pharmacy  
Kristy Nabhan-Warren, OVPR  
Peter Snyder, Carver College of Medicine  
Sarah Vigmostad, College of Engineering  
Pamela Wesley, College of Education  
Adrien Wing, College of Law

### **Affinity Group Directors**

Ari Ariel, Co-Director, Jewish Studies Network, and Director, International Studies Program  
Cynthia Chou, Director, Center for Asian & Pacific Studies  
Claudia Corwin, Director, Global Health Network  
Cory Gundlach, Director, African Studies Program  
Meena Khandelwal, Director, South Asian Studies Program  
Kristen Kumpf Baele, Director, Anne Frank Initiative  
Marina Zaloznaya, Director, European Studies Group

### **Senior Advisors and Program Coordinators**

Emily Brown, Senior Advisor and Program Coordinator, Study Abroad  
Monica Ernberger, Assistant Director, Internships, Study Abroad  
Ana Jimenez, Senior Advisor and Program Coordinator, Study Abroad  
Teresa Kout, Assistant Director, Scholarships, Study Abroad  
Shuhui Lin, Coordinator, International Education Program & Student Affairs Advisor , International Student & Scholar Services  
Kevin Roiseland, Senior Advisor, International Student & Scholar Services

### **International Student Advisory Board**

Fascha Aryasa, Undergrad Board President  
Nanle Gusen, Grad Board President

Bageshree Joshi, Undergrad Board Communication Director  
Kahyun Kang, Social Media Director, USG International Constituency Senator, liaison to ISAB  
Ariadna Orbe Vivero

### **Study Abroad Students**

Koro Castillo, William Chase, Rose Grau, Ty Harmon, Frankie Mesecc