Review of International Programs Academic Centers, Programs and Groups

April 2015

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1. Purpose and Form of the Review

International Programs (IP) provides leadership and support for internationally-oriented teaching, research, creative work and community engagement at the University of Iowa. It is charged with internationalizing the undergraduate, graduate and professional curricula across departments and disciplines; promoting international scholarship and educational exchange; enhancing the Iowa experience for international students and scholars; furthering globally-oriented knowledge and activities across (and in partnership with) the state of Iowa; and helping to create a community and society responsive to the increasingly global needs and obligations of citizenship.

The mission of IP is broad and varied, and includes intellectual and administrative support for international students and scholars, Study Abroad, and substantial outreach and engagement activities. This review, however confines its attention to the structure and activities of eight faculty-led academic programs and centers: the African Studies Program (ASP), Caribbean, Diaspora, and Atlantic Studies (CDA), the Center for Asian and Pacific Studies (CAPS), the Confucius Institute (CI), the European Studies Group (ESG), the Global Health Studies Program (GHSP), the Latin American Studies Program (LASP), and the South Asian Studies Program (SASP). The goal of this review, as underscored at the outset, is to “take a critical look at the activities of the faculty-led centers and programs, together and individually, and to explore how the groups might adapt to current circumstances to create better visibility and impact for internationally-oriented learning, discovery, and engagement. … Particular attention will be given to the alignment of the academic centers, programs, and groups with the missions of IP and UI’s colleges.”

The review process began in Fall 2014, when the constituent Centers and Programs were asked to complete summary reports of their scope and goals, their recent activities, their contributions to research and teaching, their recent funding, and their linkages or collaboration with other academic units (inside and outside of IP). These were collected in a single “Strategic Assessment” document (included here as Appendix 1), bracketed by a framing introduction,
and a series of appendices detailing the organization and funding of IP and its Academic Centers and Programs. This Assessment was made available to the Review Committee in early January. From March 1-3, 2015, the Committee met on campus. The campus visit (see full schedule attached as Appendix 2) included scheduled interviews with the leadership of IP and of each of the eight Academic Centers and Programs, meetings with the IP Advisory Committee and the leadership of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and three open ("drop-in") sessions for IP-affiliated faculty. In response to a general call for input, the Committee also received direct communications from IP faculty and Center leadership. The committee had a few opportunities to meet and share notes during the March visit; the substantive drafting of this report was a collaborative process that followed that visit.

Throughout this process, the review was guided by a set of framing questions (see pages ii-iii Strategic Assessment, Appendix 1), focused on the research and curricular contributions, interdepartmental and intercollegiate connections, funding patterns and profiles, overall structure, and vision and planning. The Committee did not, at the same time, confine its attention to the scope of these questions. Indeed our discussions and deliberations considered the role of IP and its constituent centers in the broadest possible context.

2. Internationalization at the University of Iowa

Internationalization is near the core of institutional goals and planning. The current UI Strategic Plan ("Renewing the Iowa Promise") underscores the importance of “international and multicultural perspectives in our institutional missions,” and sets goals to “expand the proportion of students who study abroad,” and “expand the University’s global reach through active partnerships with institutions abroad.” This is echoed in the mission and strategic planning of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, which aims to “engage with the people of Iowa, the nation, and the world,” and to conduct its activities in “a culturally diverse, humane, technologically advanced, and globally conscious community.”

In these efforts, IP can and should play a critical role in infusing and balancing international perspectives in the three-pronged mission—education, research, and engagement--of a top-ranked public research university. In pursuing these institutional goals, IP has a unique capacity and capability to bridge operational and organizational (collegiate, departmental, or disciplinary) divisions. This capacity reflects both IP’s broad interdisciplinary reach, and its operational scope, which ranges from research and curricular contributions to basic services--for international students and scholars coming to Iowa, and for Iowa students studying abroad. Indeed global competencies are vital to each and every student and not just those with the opportunity to study abroad. In this sense, IP can connect, educate and develop initiatives to broaden learning and awareness for all students and for all faculty. While not a conventional academic unit, IP has the unique position and capacity to connect not just the traditional (geographically-aligned) areas of International studies but also to connect across themes, disciplines, colleges, expertise, and curricula.
3. IP Academic Centers and Programs

There are eight faculty-led Centers and Programs housed in IP. These Centers and Programs vary widely in their structure, activities, resources, and relationship to degree programs. Several of these predated the creation of IP (as a unit reporting to the provost) in 1997. The number of these programs peaked at sixteen in 2008, but since then half of these have folded or moved to other units. None of the current Centers or Programs has had Department of Education Title VI funding at any time during the past decade (IP, as a unit, held a National Resource Center, Title VI grant until 2006).

Centers and Programs vary significantly in budget and size. While their websites all list substantial numbers of affiliated faculty, conversations with the directors suggest that levels of faculty engagement vary; in some cases, the director seems solely responsible for Center activity. Activities typically include speaker series; some Centers organize an annual conference; several are involved in community outreach. Several Centers have been successful in attracting external funding, but opportunities for such funding are not equally shared by Centers, especially those whose focus is more closely aligned with the humanities. Two have endowments; the budgets of the other six are furnished by IP, following an annual summary review of activities and budget request (see summary table below).

Table 1. IP Center and Program Funding Summary, 2013-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Center</th>
<th>FY 2015</th>
<th>average, FY 2013-2015</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IP GEF</td>
<td>other GEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Studies</td>
<td>$9,150</td>
<td>$9,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean, Atl. Diaspora</td>
<td>$8,000</td>
<td>$8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Studies</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Global Health Studies</td>
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<td>Latin American Studies</td>
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<td>South Asian Studies</td>
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<td>Asian and Pacific Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confucious Institute</td>
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<td>$49,385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>$357,626</td>
<td>$49,385</td>
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</tbody>
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*Foundation total includes funds from Hanban University in support of Confucious Institute

Direct support of Centers and Programs, in turn, is provided by IP staff—especially in communications and relations, and accounting. IP employs a full-time grants administrator (Ann Knudson) and a full-time academic programs and services coordinator (Karen Wachsmuth) who support the Centers and Programs. However, funded faculty support has weakened in recent years. IP had a half-time Associate Dean until 2012, when the position was eliminated. A quarter-time Director of Academic Programs position was created in August 2012 but (due to the departure of the director to another institution), an administrative fellow (compensated only with a small research stipend) is currently overseeing the Academic Programs area.
4. Issues Raised by the Review, and Recommendations

The Committee’s campus visit in early March, alongside our reading of the relevant background materials, raised a number of important issues, concerns, and questions. These—alongside the recommendations that follow from them—are organized under five broad categories below: Internationalization at Iowa, Planning and Governance, Cohesion and Coordination, Curricular Contributions, and Funding. For each of these, we consider the recent history and current prospects of IP Centers and Programs, outline the concerns and perceptions of important stakeholders, and offer recommendations for moving forward. Some of the recommendations—reflecting their importance and impacts—are reiterated under different categories.

4.1 Internationalization at Iowa

We begin with an overarching concern: the ability of IP’s Academic Centers and Programs, as currently configured, to sustain and fulfill the institutional goal of internationalization. While our meetings with directors and affiliated faculty revealed tremendous personal investment in the ideals of interdisciplinary area studies and in UI’s potential to achieve a truly internationalized outlook, many also expressed concern for what is perceived as a weakened commitment to internationalization on the part of the upper administration, a lack of recognition for IP activities within their home departments, and a lack of material support for their activities.

Over the course of the two day campus visit, many spoke to us of their frustration with a number of recent changes: the end of the opportunities for team-teaching and graduate student funding associated with the Crossing Borders initiative; the breakup of the International Studies BA program into an ISBA and an IR Major and its move out of IP and into the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; the dissolution of IP’s faculty steering committee and its replacement with an Advisory Council consisting of administrators; and the suspension of IP’s positions of Associate Dean and later, the Director of Academic Programs. Many described a trajectory of institutional commitment, which seemed strong (despite Iowa’s stature among Midwest R-1 institutions) between the late 1980s and about 2010 but has fallen off since then. The era of institutional strength and commitment (reflected in external grants and awards, faculty lines for foreign-area research instruction, new area studies and language programs, enlarged library collections [and bibliographic support] in key international areas, an increase in study abroad opportunities, and a regular schedule of distinguished foreign visitors and other campus events) was built on both faculty commitment and, as one respondent put it “tangible encouragement from a succession of University presidents, vice-presidents for research and provosts to collaborate in a single entrepreneurial unit . . . which gained national recognition for innovative instructional programs.” But, not anymore. While the IP Centers and Programs “continue to function academically and to serve their student constituencies,” as one observer concludes,
“they have been adrift for several years, and the overall purpose and coherence of international studies are currently at their lowest ebb in the University since the 1980s.”

We think this assessment, given what the Centers and Programs continue to offer and IP’s strong commitment to outreach and engagement, a little stark. But the sentiment was strong enough and common enough that it deserves close attention. The success and vitality of IP’s Centers and Programs depend upon strong and transparent institutional support. But, as importantly, they rely upon the signal that such support sends to the faculty who are active in established Centers and Programs—and in new ones that might be on the horizon. A small institutional investment of commitment and resources—as we detail below—has the promise of galvanizing strong and sustained faculty engagement across the University; uncertainty on this front, by contrast, runs the risk of squandering those opportunities.

Recommendations:

- Restore the faculty led executive committee, as an important mechanism for cross- and intra-collegiate coordination and communication on international matters.
- Restore the IP-based position of Associate Dean or Director of Academic Programs
- Negotiate with CLAS and other units to grant faculty leadership of Centers and Programs course release, so that such contributions are rewarded rather than penalized

4.2 Planning and Governance

The greatest strength of IP and its Centers and Programs—its position outside and alongside the conventional, tiered organization of Colleges and Division and Departments—is also an organizational liability or challenge. This is evident in both the day-to-day administration and governance of IP Centers and Programs, and in their longer term planning. Recent changes have left many IP-affiliated faculty feeling “isolated” or “orphaned.” While most applaud the commitment of CLAS and the University to internationalization (as reflected in the international goals and mechanisms specified in recent strategic plans), many are frustrated by the minimal role or input left for IP—or its constituent Centers and Programs—in this ongoing process. In the last year, for example, IP encouraged its faculty affiliates to contribute ideas and priorities to the early stages of strategic planning by CLAS—but only as individuals. In this sense, IP has ceased to be an academic planning unit in its own right, and ceased to draw upon the collective expertise of its affiliated faculty.

This absence of fruitful collaboration is also evident in governance. We offer no assessment here of the governance of the constituent Centers and Programs themselves: these vary too much in scope and capacity to offer such generalizations, and it is not a topic the committee devoted much attention to. Rather our concern is for the collective governance of the enterprise, and the opportunities for those Centers and Programs to both collaborate with one and other within a structure that accommodates their diverse portfolios. In this respect, IP-affiliated faculty keenly miss the old “executive committee.” Even those who felt this body had
little substantive power or input, nevertheless valued the opportunity to meet with their colleagues from other IP-affiliated units. The current Advisory Council does little to fill this breach—in part because faculty presence is swamped by administrative members, and in part because even members of the Advisory Council expressed frustration with meetings which often devolved into one-sided presentations, with little opportunity to provide input or shape policy. A new executive or steering committee, composed of program and center heads and their seconds as well as a handful of other key actors (e.g., the Fulbright coordinator, the grants officer and responsible associate collegiate deans) would address many of these concerns—and could serve as an efficient means to coordinate new courses, support foreign language instructional needs, publicize scholarship and grant-related opportunities, etc.

Some of these governance challenges are also reflected in the structure of the international studies major (now housed in CLAS). While most acknowledge the administrative logic of housing degree programs within colleges, rather than in IP, the move of the major to CLAS is still viewed by many as a “loss.” To the review committee, it is not entirely clear why this need be so. Clearly, the CLAS Deans believe in the power and value of international perspectives. A stronger partnership between IP Centers and Programs (or just IP) and CLAS could turn that “loss” into a substantial victory. But, for this to happen, greater clarity is needed regarding the governance of the degree and certificate programs. Since curriculum in any university is under the purview of the faculty, those who teach the courses and advise the students in these interdepartmental programs are stakeholders who should be directly involved in the governance of these programs. At issue, in some respects, is simply where those “lines” reside. If IP is to be regarded primarily as a service unit (supporting study abroad, international students and scholars, and publicity and outreach, etc.), then faculty lines (or partial faculty lines) in support of CLAS-based majors (International Studies, International Relations, Global Health Studies) should be housed in, and recognized by, the College. Faculty leadership of non-Departmental units (such as GHS) should be afforded the same course release conventionally granted to Directors of Undergraduate Studies in conventional Departments.

Recommendations

- Re-establish a faculty-led executive or steering committee; this is essential to facilitating collaboration, communicating across units, strategizing about funding, and coordinating curriculum. This committee would include Center and Program Directors, faculty leadership of CLAS-based majors, and key staff (professional advisors, etc.)
- The current Advisory Council should continue to oversee the “operations” side of IP; a representative from each group (steering, advisory) would sit on the other committee.
- Each committee needs to have a clear charge, defined decision-making capacity, and ability to provide substantive input on decisions made elsewhere.
- An Associate Dean (or Director of Academic Programs) could oversee the operations of the Centers and chair the faculty steering committee.
• With all of this in mind, current leadership/staff should study models at 2-3 other peer institutions i.e. their model of IP organization and management of similar centers (pick one that has consolidated and learn from their lessons). Michigan State University, U of Minnesota, Penn State and Purdue might provide different examples

4.3 Cohesion and Coordination

Much of the substance of the observations and recommendations made thus far relate to the lack of coordination or cohesion across Center and Programs. Here again, stakeholders miss the role played by the old executive committee and (potentially) by an Associate Dean and/or a Director of Academic Programs. Indeed, the most common note struck in our meetings and interviews was the absence of “coordination” or “glue” or “connective tissue” or “common purpose” that might make the whole better than the sum of its parts. A plethora of Centers and Programs championing specific interests or areas of research can actually hamper such coordination—especially under resource-constrained circumstances. At present each IP Center or Program (as well as international concentrations in the health science, business and law schools) exist as independent silos of research, curricula and programming -- with few opportunities to meet and combine aspirations and resources.

This lack of cohesion is felt acutely in a few key areas. In the absence of an Associate Dean or Director of Academic Programs, there exists little capacity to explore cooperative links between units and corresponding units across campus (such as the Division of Interdisciplinary Programs in CLAS, the Global Health committee in the College of Public Health, and the International Business Certificate Program in Tippie College of Business). The pursuit of external funding is hampered by the weakness of natural learning and collaboration that would come with the opportunity for IP Faculty to share notes and opportunities across Centers and Programs. Even one of the core remaining responsibilities of the Centers and Program, programming in support of curriculum, suffers from poor coordination and planning. This is one of the key targets of IP funding (especially of the smaller centers) and yet too often invited speakers address a single unit and draw a small audience. Better coordination and planning could easily address this, and perhaps better align visiting expertise with cross-Center or institutional interests (such as the theme semester).

Recommendations

• The first requirement here is an Associate Dean and/or Director of Academic Programs (DAP) whose chief function would be to coordinate key activities (instructional programs, research seminars, study abroad activity, grant opportunities, foreign linkages, etc.)

• As touched upon in the recommendations above, a reconstituted executive or steering committee, alongside a new and more carefully-described role for the advisory committee, could also play a key role here
4.4 Curriculum

This committee was charged with examining the work of the Centers, not the academic programs (an exercise which has included enrollment and degree completion statistics, as well as other logistical information). It is a testimony to the richness of the Centers and the faculty’s commitment to blending research with undergraduate teaching that many of them have given rise to or sprung up around undergraduate majors, minors, and certificate programs. However, it is important to distinguish between the curricula and operations of undergraduate programs and the intellectual work of centers. We recommend that conversations going forward should clarify the role and responsibilities of faculty in each.

This said, we think there is a clear and compelling curricular role for IP and its constituent Centers and Programs, even if the formal major and certificate programs now fall under the authority of CLAS. This review of IP Centers and Programs, in fact, coincides with a review of the general education program in CLAS. While the structure of the GER program is set largely by CLAS, it serves (with some variation) as the GER baseline for all undergraduate colleges. A new “Diversity and Inclusion” requirement (built around domestic and international diversity) provides an opportunity for IP-affiliated faculty to think systematically and collaboratively about the identification of existing courses (and the design of new ones) that might meet this requirement. And, with the leadership and expertise of IP Centers and Programs, this could be done in such a way as to fully integrate international learning across the arts, humanities, and sciences with a focus on complex problems that require interdisciplinary approaches. For this to occur, IP Centers and Programs offer themselves as sources of expertise. One promising tack, in this respect, might be to create an IP-led contribution to the new “Big Ideas” course cluster. Such a course might be team-taught by Center and Program Directors, and integrated with a Living-Learning Community, with the goal of introducing new students to the full range of international interests and expertise on campus.

There are also other opportunities for IP and its Centers and Programs to make curricular contributions, particularly (as in the GER program) for pre-majors and non-majors. The First-Year Seminar (FYS) program is an excellent opportunity for IP-faculty to promote international and area studies. IP could establish a more formal relationship with the Associate Provost’s office, perhaps taking ownership of a set of FYS slots. IP could even make Center-offered First Year Seminars a condition for further funding in support of curriculum and visitors. IP can, in our view, do much more to push the international curriculum (and study abroad opportunities) through other majors (history, languages, etc.) and at each stage of the student advising process. We also suggest a more systematic approach to curricular programming, in which funding of visitors is better aligned with other institutional goals (theme semester, Provost’s Forums, faculty clusters, Ida Beam and University Lectures), and in which there is a more vigorous promotion of campus events and visitors. This might be accomplished, by better integrating attendance at campus events into existing course offerings, or through a for-credit
“passport” course, in which students earn credits for attending campus events (on the model of a “recital” course in music).

Finally, we urge the Centers and Programs—with resources and assistance from IP—to make a more concerted effort to publicize opportunities for undergraduate research and funding. Such efforts would include more systematic faculty applications for the Iowa Center for Research by Undergraduates (ICRU) Research Fellows program (which funds undergrad research assistants for summer or for an academic year), better outreach and assistance for funding opportunities such as the Stanley and Fulbright programs, a more systematic approach to identifying (even creating) undergraduate internship opportunities, and a more productive liaison with the Pomerantz career center in the identification of career opportunities.

In short, we see both losses and gains in the move of major programs to CLAS. But we also see that transition as fully realized and unlikely to be reversed. The best solution, under these circumstance, is for IP Centers and Programs to reposition and recast their curricular role. By finding other outlets (as described above), we are confident that IP can play a key and critical role in the promotion of international learning at Iowa.

**Recommendations**

- Again, the first pressing need is for an Associate Dean and/or Director of Academic Programs
- This office could then coordinate and promote new curricular footholds for IP in areas such as the GER program, the First-Year seminar program, and the like
- And it could develop a more systematic approach to other opportunities for undergraduates (research, study abroad, campus events, etc)
- On each score, curricular contributions or innovations should be better aligned with IP and institutional goals

**4.5 Resources**

Almost all of the challenges sketched above—and the solutions to them—revolve in some way around a scarcity of resources. However lamentable this might be, it makes little sense for us—as reviewers—to imagine a much different set of political or institutional circumstances. This said, we do see ample opportunity for the realignment of existing resources, for the pursuit of external funding, and for the small investments that promise big returns.

Our first concern, in this respect, is the criteria for sustaining a “Center” or Program. Putting aside contractual commitments and matching funds, the IP budget is distributed across eight Centers and Programs of starkly different profiles, aspirations, and scales. At a very minimum, a Center should involve a faculty steering committee, a threshold membership of affiliated faculty, a clearly defined curricular role (that is, a relationship to a major or certificate program), and an active strategy for seeking external support. IP funding of its Centers should be more strategic or competitive—requiring (for example) cooperation or collaboration with
other units, matching support from Colleges and other offices at UI, or a commitment to broader institutional or curricular goals. Each Center should not feel required to carry out exactly the same activities every year, but should request the level of funding appropriate to its plans. Perhaps IP (through its faculty steering committee) could develop an overarching theme each year, for which different centers could propose projects and speakers.

Once there is a clearer, threshold criterion for the status of a Center, we see it essential that Center leadership receive appropriate course release or other compensation (perhaps summer salary). To date, most faculty receive no tangible reward for their past or present time commitment to Centers and Programs, and, in the absence of administrative recognition and encouragement, are inclined to scale back that commitment over time and return to their departments and disciplines. A number of directors expressed frustration at their inability to offer more strategic or visionary leadership, conceding that (in the absence of release time) their efforts were limited to sporadic “event planning.” The grant of release time should resemble the policies of Departments and Colleges, and should encourage buy-in from them as well. In general, there needs to be strong messaging from all levels of the university in support of the intellectual work of the Centers and their role in the University. This should not be considered an entitlement, but a competitive award based on Center activities (i.e. running a certificate, coordinating a speaker series, writing a major grant).

A similar small investment promising big returns would be the re-establishment of the Associate Dean and/or Director of Academic Programs positions, which together (or in some reconfiguration) could provide leadership and vision across Centers and Programs. Again, we feel that a small investment here would more than pay off, by providing the room and the opportunity for more strategic leadership which could—among other things—promote and coordinate applications for external awards. IP should encourage non-CLAS faculty to consider this appointment so as to bridge inter-college interactions and engage the entire University in strategic opportunities for inter-disciplinary and 21st century global challenges.

This expansive and dedicated development capacity is crucial. IP-affiliated faculty and Center and program leaderships need resources and encouragement, especially when preparing applications with faculty in other parts of the University, or attempting to secure competitive grants that impose specific requirements such as advanced foreign language study or linkages with country collaborators or the presence of social scientists together with basic scientists (the Council of American Overseas Research Centers, for example, requires two-country programming from applicants, while many science and engineering grants benefit by building a language and area specialist into the application). IP Centers and Programs can and should be more strategic in leveraging multi-College expertise and in seeking collaboration with grant-rich STEM disciplines.

Aside from applications which flow from particular faculty or Centers, IP and its Centers need to rebuild the will and the capacity to compete for large, prestigious national grants like Title VI National Resource Centers, Centers for International Business and Research and National
Science Foundation Partners in International Research and Education (PIRE), as well as for prestigious private foundation grants. These are intensely competitive, but by no means beyond reach if there is a determined multi-year effort (and sufficient institutional support). And all of this should be accompanied by a more systematic and sustained approach to fundraising through connections to international alumni, including students who have studied abroad and are willing to give to UI units other than their College.

In our view, applications for external support should be routine across Centers and Programs, perhaps even a precondition for support from the IP general fund. We see little prospect for resurrecting popular initiatives such as the Crossing Borders Program without external support, but enormous potential—for IP and its Centers and Programs—if such funding could be reestablished.

Recommendations

- IP should establish a stricter or more competitive set of criteria (in terms of programming, curriculum, or funded research) for the status of a funded “Center”
- Once this threshold is met, Center leadership should receive appropriate support, in the form of course release or summer salary
- Centers and Programs need the resources and leadership and incentive to make external funding a much more prominent element of their annual portfolios

5. Conclusion

Despite recent setbacks—including the loss of the Center on Human Rights (now in the Law School) and the international studies major (now housed in CLAS)—we were impressed and heartened by the enthusiasm and dedication of IP-affiliated faculty and by the range of contributions made by IP’s Center and Programs. At the same time, the missions and capacities of those Center and Programs are starkly uneven, and their institutional roles—in support of research, curriculum, and public programming—are not clearly articulated or pursued.

Our assessment and recommendations, in a sense, revolve around three themes.

- The first is the crying need for stronger connective tissue across and between Centers and Programs—something we feel could be accomplished by re-establishing a faculty steering committee, investing in cross-Center leadership (Associate Dean and/or Director of Academic Programs), and pursuing the resources needed to reestablish cross-cutting curricular initiatives like the Crossing Borders Program.
- The second is the need to rethink and reinvent IP and Center or Program contributions to the curriculum: rather than lament the break up and move of the IP major, IP faculty should be looking for other curricular outlets—such as the GER or FYS programs.
• And the third is the need to better calibrate Center resources and activities, essentially to hold Centers to a higher standard (in terms of curricular contributions or funded research) and then to reward them accordingly (with matching funds from IP, course release for Center leadership, etc.)