

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**REQUEST TO TERMINATE THE MASTER OF ARTS PROGRAM IN  
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA**

**Action Requested:** Consider recommending approval of the request by the University of Iowa to terminate the Master of Arts Program in International Studies (ISMA) in the Graduate College and the International Programs Department.

**Executive Summary:** The request to terminate the Program resulted from significantly reduced interest in the program. This request was reviewed by the Board Office and the Council of Provosts and is recommended for approval. This request addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan priority to pursue “educational excellence and impact” and Goal #8 – “Iowa’s public universities and special schools shall be increasingly efficient and productive.”

**Background:**

- ◇ Description of program. The ISMA program is designed to appeal to exceptional students who have identified an area of international interest and who are suited to a flexible, tailor-made program of graduate study on international issues. It is for students who seek an interdisciplinary approach to graduate study. The degree is awarded upon the completion of a coherent program of study, beginning with a core requirement, the “International Colloquium,” designed as a methodological and theoretical foundation for the degree. Building on that foundation, interrelated courses are selected in close consultation with a faculty advisor to allow students to develop a focus area related to their degree goals. Students must complete a thesis or final project based on research conducted on a required international experience. The program is administered by the International Programs Graduate Affairs Committee and the faculty Director of Academic Programs.
- ◇ History of program. The ISMA program was approved by the Board of Regents in April 2009 (Agenda Item 2o). It was intended to build on the Bachelor of Arts Program in International Studies which allows students to explore opportunities in the humanities and social sciences. The undergraduate program prepares students for careers in business, government, international development agencies, non-governmental organizations, philanthropic agencies, and the arts. The ISMA program was expected to appeal to students who were interested in questions of development, politics, history, health, culture, and human rights beyond the undergraduate level.
- ◇ Reason for proposed termination. In July 2011, the Bachelor of Arts Program in International Studies underwent significant revisions which resulted in moving administration of the program from International Studies to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. This move, which separated the undergraduate and graduate programs, eliminated the synergy between the two programs which had been the reason for establishing the graduate program in International Studies. The reason for the proposed termination also includes a number of other factors:
  - ⇒ While the program was designed to be small (3-5 students admitted annually), fewer students than expected have enrolled.
  - ⇒ The quality of the applicant pool has not been as high as anticipated.
  - ⇒ Most applicants do not have a compelling reason for pursuing this degree.

- ⇒ The interdisciplinary setting of International Programs was designed to be a positive element in the program design. However, the move of the undergraduate program to the College of Liberal Arts and Science eliminated a sufficient student community and a sense of departmental 'home' in International Programs.
- ⇒ Despite the efforts of the dean and associate dean, the degree of faculty involvement and mentoring has not been sufficient because faculty primary appointments are in the collegiate departments rather than in International Programs.
- ◇ Impact of proposed termination on programming. If the proposed termination is approved by the Board of Regents, suspension of admissions to the program will become effective immediately. However, the required courses for graduation will continue to be offered until the remaining students complete their degrees.
- ◇ Three-year trend of enrollments and graduations. Between Fall 2010 and Fall 2012, there were six students enrolled; five students are still enrolled. To date, four students have graduated from the program.
- ◇ Impact on resources. Terminating the program is not expected to result in savings because faculty members hold primary appointments in other collegiate departments.
- ◇ Impact on workforce. The proposed program termination is not expected to affect the workforce needs of the state.
- ◇ Alternative programming. There is no graduate program in International Studies available elsewhere in Iowa. However, students who have an interest in this type of tailor-made program can be served through the existing Graduate College Interdisciplinary Studies Program.
- ◇ Effect on current students. Currently, there are five students in the program. They will have the opportunity to complete their degree under the requirements of the program. It is anticipated that the remaining students will complete their degree by May 2014.
- ◇ Effective date of termination. If the proposed program termination is approved by the Board, suspension of admissions to the program will become effective immediately and will be reflected on the department website and University Catalog. Termination of the program will become effective upon completion of the program by the five students who are currently enrolled.