

REQUEST FOR A NEW PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA
MASTER OF ARTS PROGRAM IN INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Action Requested: Consider approval of the request by the University of Iowa to establish a new Master of Arts Program in International Studies which will be administered by the Graduate College.

Executive Summary: The proposed program will provide an interdisciplinary and international approach to graduate study. This proposal was reviewed by the Board Office and the Council of Provosts and is recommended for approval. No concerns were raised when it was presented to the Iowa Coordinating Council for Post-High School Education. The proposed program addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan priority (1.0) to “ensure high-quality educational opportunities for students.”

Background:

- ◇ **Description of program.** The proposed program is designed to be student-based and responsive to individualized interests using an interdisciplinary approach to graduate study rather than a clear disciplinary direction. The International Colloquium will be designed as a methodological and theoretical foundation for the degree. Building on that foundation, interrelated courses will be selected to allow each student to develop a focus area in relation to individual degree goals. All students will complete a thesis or final project based on research conducted on a required international experience.
- ◇ **Relationship to existing programs at ISU.** The proposed program will build on the Bachelor of Arts Program in International Studies. This multi-disciplinary program allows students to explore opportunities in the humanities and social sciences. The program prepares students for careers in business, government, international development agencies, non-governmental organizations, philanthropic agencies, and the arts.
- ◇ **Duplication.** There are no other institutions in the state that offer the same program. ISU offers two graduate programs that allow students to focus on international development or relations. While these programs offer students opportunities to select an international emphasis, the broader interdisciplinary scope of the proposed program will give students a wider range of options and will appeal to a diverse population with different academic goals and professional aspirations.
- ◇ **Student demand.** The proposed 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 study on international issues. The proposed program will appeal to students who are interested in questions of development, politics, history, health, culture, and human rights beyond the undergraduate level and will provide practical preparation for employment. The optimal annual admission is expected to be 3-5 students, with a maximum of eight students admitted in any given year. Graduates of the proposed program will be prepared for employment in government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector.

- ◇ Unique features. The proposed program will build on two related strengths – a successful undergraduate program in International Studies with approximately 450 majors and the expertise and experience of a faculty engaged in research on a variety of international issues and topics. The proposed program's flexibility will allow students to pursue their interests; it will also be able to adapt quickly to changing world political processes, institutions, and cultural trends.
- ◇ Resources. The academic and administrative infrastructure to support the proposed program already exists and no new staff will be required. The International Programs Unit has approximately 11 funded graduate assistant positions which offer a variety of professional and academic opportunities with an international theme; priority will be given to students in the proposed program. The University Library has a growing international studies collection which will provide support to students in the proposed program. No other resources will be required.
- ◇ Cost. The University projects that there will be no additional costs associated with the proposed program.
- ◇ Projected enrollment. The projected enrollment is two students in Year 1, increasing to eight students by Year 7.
- ◇ Link to institutional strategic plan. The proposed program addresses SUI's goal "to internationalize the education experience, increase international communication and collaboration, and equip students to live as members of an international community."