

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**REQUEST FOR NEW PROGRAMS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA:
BACHELOR OF ARTS AND BACHELOR OF SCIENCE PROGRAMS IN
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

Action Requested: Consider approval of the request by the University of Iowa to establish new Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science Programs in International Relations in the Department of Political Science in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Executive Summary: The proposed programs will offer new opportunities for students in the field of international relations. 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 programs address the Board of Regents Strategic Plan priorities to “provide educational excellence and impact as well as economic development and vitality” as well as Goal #8 – “Iowa’s public universities and special schools shall be increasingly efficient and productive.”

Background:

- ◇ **Description of programs.** International relations is the study of political and economic relations between states and an important area of study for undergraduates. The proposed programs will provide students a basis for understanding patterns of conflict and cooperation between and within states, the issues surrounding transnational issues, and the politics of other countries. The proposed programs will be anchored in Political Science and will draw on other social sciences that benefit students.
 - ⇒ The Bachelor of Arts Program in International Relations will consist of 12-13 credit hours of required core coursework that provides the foundation for understanding international relations. Students will be required to take three credit hours on the methodology used to analyze and understand international relations. Fifteen credit hours will be required in one of four tracks – Conflict and Foreign Policy; International Business and Economic Relations; Regional Politics and Relationships; and Transnational Issues. Each track is a traditional area of specialty in international relations and is addressed in the 12-13 credit hours of core coursework. Seniors will be required to take a three credit hour capstone seminar.
 - ⇒ The Bachelor of Science Program in International Relations adds an additional math and statistics sequence.
- ◇ **Proposed program objectives.**
 - ⇒ Demonstrate specific knowledge of international relations in written and oral presentations.
 - ⇒ Critically assess arguments made in international politics.
 - ⇒ Apply research in international relations to evaluate current political events in written and oral presentations.
 - ⇒ Demonstrate a broad understanding of approaches to studying international relations.

- ⇒ Demonstrate an understanding of approaches to studying international conflict and foreign policy, international business and economic relations, regional politics and relationships, and transnational issues.
- ⇒ Apply research in international relations to evaluate current issues in international conflict and foreign policy, international business and economic relations, regional politics and relationships, and transnational issues.
- ◇ Relationship to existing programs at SUI. The proposed programs are expected to enhance existing majors. They provide a natural complement to existing majors that have classes on the topic of international relations. While Political Science, History, Geography, and Economics include classes that discuss international relations, each is individually limited in the number and scope of classes on international relations. Furthermore, these majors focus on international relations from their disciplinary perspective. The proposed international relations programs will bridge and link these courses into a coherent and interdisciplinary approach to studying international relations.
- ◇ Need for proposed programs. Course offerings in international relations are currently provided to students as a subtrack. Students are supervised by faculty associated with the Bachelor of Arts Program in International Studies rather than by faculty who teach in the program area. The proposed programs will elevate the subtrack to degree status; program faculty will be responsible for supervising students and the curriculum. The change will create a better experience for students who previously indicated that they did not have an academic home.
- ◇ Unique features. The proposed programs have a number of unique features: (1) It incorporates a research component. This research focus is not part of any existing IR major in the state. This component makes students more competitive in the workforce. (2) It provides multiple tracks which allow students to gain a general understanding of international relations and specialize in a specific area. (3) It provides a broader range of classes and experiences for students, including classes in public health, as a result of the faculty size and expertise. (4) It provides an additional institutional source of support through International Programs for students who are likely to study abroad and pursue grants and fellowships related to international relations.
- ◇ Duplication. Iowa State University and Loras College have an International Studies program; Wartburg College, Drake University, and Cornell College have an International Relations program. A distinguishing feature of the proposed program is the number and diversity of classes available at the University of Iowa.
- ◇ Student demand. Prior enrollment in international relations classes demonstrates a likely high demand for the proposed program because the classes are usually filled to capacity. A significant number of students choose the emphasis area in programs like Political Science that have an emphasis area in international relations. Entering freshmen as well as transfer students are likely to choose this major if they are interested in careers in international affairs and economics. An additional source of students is likely to be majors in Political Science, History, Geography, and Economics who select international relations as a double major or who are pursuing international relations as a track in one of those program areas.

- ◇ Projected enrollment. The projected enrollment is 100 students in Year 1, increasing to 300 students by Year 7. It is likely that an additional 100 non-major students will also enroll in program courses each year.
- ◇ Workforce need/demand. Demand for graduates with a degree in international relations is likely to come from several sources. This major is a gateway to jobs in the U.S. government, including the Foreign Service, Defense Department, and different intelligence agencies. International organizations, such as the United Nations, are also a source of employment. Non-governmental organizations and non-profits are a source of employment for international relations majors. These organizations seek students with a liberal arts background and knowledge of international relations. Private employers, especially those that do contract work for the Defense Department or intelligence agencies, are also likely to be interested in these program graduates. Consulting and international businesses are likely to seek program graduates that have pursued the international business and economics track of the proposed program. Data from the *Wall Street Journal* show that program graduates have a 5.8% unemployment rate and a median income of \$57,000.
- ◇ Resources. No new faculty, facilities, or equipment will be required for the proposed programs. Existing faculty and classes will support the programs.
- ◇ Cost. Existing faculty in the College of Liberal Arts and Science will support the necessary courses for the proposed programs. A total of \$21,000 will be reallocated to fund advising expenses and one teaching assistant.
- ◇ Link to institutional strategic plan. Goal 1 of the Strategic Plan of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is to “provide students a rich and challenging experience in General Education and in the undergraduate major” and to “educate students for success and personal fulfillment in an increasingly diverse and global environment.” The proposed programs address the strategic plan by providing a major that will educate students on the complexity and diversity of the global environment. The programs’ focus on political and economic relations between states prepares students to succeed in the global environment by providing the knowledge and analytical tools needed to understand the modern world.