

Global and International Studies

MA International Studies; Major in Global and International Studies (BA); Joint Major in Economics and International Studies; Joint Major in Global and International Studies and Political Science

Faculty of Indigenous Studies, Social Sciences and Humanities

Reviewers are asked to provide a report that:

- Identifies and commends the degree program's notably strong and creative attributes
- Describes the degree program's respective strengths, areas for improvement, and opportunities for enhancement
- Recommends specific steps to be taken to improve the degree program, distinguishing between those the program can itself take and those that require external action
- Recognizes the institution's autonomy to determine priorities for funding, space, and faculty allocation; and
- Respects the confidentiality required for all aspects of the review process

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PART 1 - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Executive Summary will be made publicly available on the Provost's website.

ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT: Department of Global and International Studies

DEGREE PROGRAM(S) UNDER REVIEW:

MA International Studies; Major in Global and International Studies (BA); Joint Major in Economics and International Studies; Joint Major in Global and International Studies and Political Science

CHAIR/DIRECTOR:

Dr Fiona MacDonald

DATE OF DEGREE PROGRAM(S) REVIEW:

Sept 19&20, 2023

DATE OF THE PREVIOUS DEGREE PROGRAM(S) REVIEW

2012

INTERNAL RESOURCE PERSON:

Selina Ross; John McNeill

REVIEWERS

Sara Matthews	Laura Parisi
Associate Professor	Associate Professor
Wilfrid Laurier University	University of Victoria
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I. SUMMARY OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW OF DEGREE PROGRAM(S) PROCESS

Drs. Laura Parisi and Sara Matthews were warmly welcomed to the UNBC campus on September 19 and 20, 2023. We were joined by Dr David Casperson, internal representative for UNBC. During our site visit, we were able to undertake a campus tour, a meeting with a class of INTS undergraduates, and a dinner with unit Chair Dr Fiona MacDonald, in addition to the following in-person stakeholder meetings: Faculty Relations Representative; Dean, Faculty of Indigenous Studies, Social Sciences and Humanities (FISSH); INTS full-time faculty members, INTS language instructors and senior instructor; UNBC Research and Innovation representatives; Student Advising staff; FISSH administrative staff; INTS administrative staff; Chair, Political Science; Chair, Economics; and the FISSH librarian. Additionally, we shared meals with

INTS faculty and members of the INTS graduate council. Unfortunately, we were not able to meet with INTS MA graduate students.

We toured the Faculty facilities, including classrooms, office areas, the Library and the First Nations Centre. We also received a self-study report authored by Dr MacDonald, Chair of the Department. The report offered a good grounding for our review, and we were able to request more detailed institutional data from John McNeill, Administrative Manager for Strategic Initiatives and Operations. Detailed institutional data, along with its interpretation, would be a helpful addition to self-study packages so that reviewers can respond adequately to the reviewer template.

II. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Major Strengths of the Degree Program

- Significant curriculum revision to the BA INTS degree to make required degree credits more in line with other BA programs requirements.
- Creation of two new minors: Global Sustainability; Japanese Language and Culture
- Experiential learning opportunities in classes and field schools (Arctic Sustainability Academy), and through the Travelling Knowledges program.
- Active and dynamic researchers who represent cutting edge areas of Global and International Studies. They publish widely in top academic journals and respected presses and are successful in grant competitions. Faculty are also engaged in applied research and publishing.
- Innovative and award-winning teaching, coupled with faculty publications in the scholarship of teaching.
- Revision of the MA program to reflect a more targeted emphasis on Global Development and Environment.
- Strong enrollments in and high number of applications to the MA Program.
- Collegial department, and good support and mentorship of junior faculty.
- Good working relationships with other departments and programs, and courses also support degree program requirements in many other departments and programs.
- Department's mission and inter/multi/trans disciplinary curriculum deeply aligns with and supports the four themes of the UNBC Strategic Framework.

Significant Areas of Weakness or In Need of Further Development

- Workload and admissions process in the MA Program.
- Admissions cycle in the MA program, and course-based MA degree requirements.
- Lack of program learning outcomes in the MA program.
- The Cultures and Diversity stream is not as stable as the other streams, due to reliance on sessional teaching for Spanish and French, and limited offerings by INTS department members.

- Capacity issues in terms of the future of departmental leadership and retirement of a core faculty member. Retiring faculty in Economics has a significant impact on both the INTS BA and MA programs.
- Need for creating a strong unit identity for the program for recruitment and messaging, and to distinguish itself from other departments who also offer courses with global perspectives.
- On-line calendar links from the INTS and ECON websites are not accurate with regards to new program requirements in the joint majors.

Comments of the Future Direction of the Degree Program(s)

Overall, we feel that the department is on the right track with the revisions to BA major, and minors that the department is currently offering. However, it is too early to assess the impact of these revisions on enrollment and the declaration of INTS majors/minors. Future plans to create joint programs with Women’s Studies as well Anthropology seem doable with existing resources, though care will need to be taken in distinguishing the joint degree offering with Women’s Studies from the Joint Major in Political Science and Women’s Studies. There may be opportunities to collaborate with other departments, such as First Nations Studies.

The MA program’s focus on Global Development and Environment is timely and likely to continue to attract a healthy number of applicants. Some recent changes have been to the MA program with regards to different streams and the admissions process, and it may be too early to assess the impact of those changes.

Although this is not under the Department’s purview, we note that almost everyone we met with raised issues around the level of support of international students. Given the high numbers of international students in INTS degree programs and classes, the lack of institutional support for international students does impact the future of the department, and the university more generally.

III. SUMMARY OF THE REVIEWERS’ RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS	DESCRIPTION OF THE RECOMMENDATION
One: MA Program	Restructure the course based MA program for completion within one academic year; adopt a fall admissions cycle; determine ideal cohort size; reconsider faculty workload for thesis/coursework option; develop and communicate distinct program identity and consider renaming the graduate program to better reflect its focus on global development and environment; introduce mechanisms for increased student

	research collaboration; produce program learning outcomes; encourage eligible 1 st year MA students pursuing the thesis option to apply for MA SSHRC funding.
Two: Unit Identity	Craft a strong unit identity/messaging that can be used for internal and external communications (collaboration, recruitment) based concretely in the four themes (global cultures and diversity, global governance and justice, global political economy and development, global environment and sustainability); make program learning outcomes explicit within INTS core course syllabi.
Three: BA Program	Reduce required credits on par with other Faculty programs; develop a new INTS or faculty wide 300 level class featuring applied practice/professionalization as means for building a cohort and to provide a unique offering; consider revenue generation opportunities such as continuing education certificates for language learning and/or “plus one” direct entry programs. Work with other departments towards future joint hires. Update and revise the on-line calendar for the major, and joint majors.
Four: Faculty succession	Develop an administrative workload plan that is equitable and implement faculty retention strategies.

Faculty of Indigenous Studies, Social Sciences and Humanities (FISSSH)

B.A.

M.A.

Global and International Studies

Chair: Dr. Fiona MacDonald

Dean: Dr. Kriston Rennie

Provost and Vice President, Academic: Dr. Bill Owen (Interim)

Date UNBC Received the External

Review of Degree Programs Report: November 23, 2023

**Please Note: The Responses to the External Review of Degree Program(s)
Report, Action Plan and the 36 Month Action Plan Progress Report are made
publically available on the Provost's website.**

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PART 1 – ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT’S RESPONSE TO THE EXTERNAL REVIEW OF DEGREE PROGRAM(S) REPORT

(March 8 2024)

I. Overall Impression of the Summary of Findings and Recommendations from the External Review of Degree Program Report

Overall, the department assessed the external review findings and recommendations as both fair and comprehensive. All recommendations were received in good faith and discussed at the departmental retreat in January 2024. As noted in the following action plan, a number of small recommendations were implemented immediately following the retreat and we are in the midst of moving forward on more complex recommendations through steps detailed in the proceeding plan. We thank the reviewers for their work and recommendations.

II. Correction of Factual Errors or Areas of Misunderstanding in the Report

One factual error was identified in the departmental review of the report. On page 16 under the heading, “Support for faculty Development” the report states that faculty can submit 10-50K for research start up. This is incorrect. Faculty have been informed that 10K is the maximum available for research start up.

PART 2 - ACTION PLAN

What steps does the Academic Administrative Unit intend or propose to take in response to the recommendations from the *External Review of Degree Program(s) Report*?

UNBC Responses to the External Review of Degree Program(s) Report

1	Recommendation	MA Program	
	<p>Action #1</p> <p>Restructure course based-MA program for completion in one year; adopt a fall admissions cycle; determine ideal cohort size; develop and communicate distinct program identity and consider renaming the graduate program to better reflect focus on global development and environment, introduce mechanisms for increased student research collaboration; produce program learning outcomes; encourage eligible 1st year students to apply for MA SSHRC funding</p>	<p>The department met in January 2024 to discuss these recommendations. At this meeting the department voted to permanently move to a fall admission cycle and to no longer offer winter admissions. But to assess deferrals as needed. The department also agreed to appoint a Departmental Grad Chair as recommended on page 11 of the full report. This position will be implemented as of April 2024.</p> <p>An MA cohort target for admissions was set at the department retreat in January 2024. For the 2024-2025 academic year the target is 25 admissions with a goal of 12 acceptances. These numbers will be reviewed prior to the next academic year admissions and will be adjusted accordingly.</p> <p>The department is in ongoing discussion on developing explicit learning outcomes re: preparedness for admissions. These discussions are taking place at the departmental and faculty level and will inform new practices in the upcoming admissions cycle for the 2024-2025 academic year.</p> <p>The department is in ongoing discussion on the recommendation to restructure the course-based MA to a one-year completion timeline. We are initiating a scan of comparable one-year programs and their current delivery models/ program outcomes. We anticipate the completion of this scan on or before January 31, 2025. Consultations on this recommendation will also take place with students and the grad council during this time span.</p> <p>The department will open discussion on the possibility of renaming the program at the March 2024 department meeting while recognizing that existing faculty teaching and research expertise extends beyond the identified themes.</p> <p>The department has already increased opportunities for increased student research collaboration due to funding from grants awarded to individual faculty members and through department funding.</p> <p>The department is in the process of updating comprehensive program learning outcomes.</p> <p>Department members are already encouraging eligible first year students to apply for MA SSHRC funding and will continue to do so although dedicated research funding for both graduate (and undergraduate) students at the university level is limited.</p>	
	Person(s) Responsible	Department Chair, Graduate Advisor and All Full Time Department Members	
	Target Implementation Date	January 31, 2025	
	Implementation Details	12 month Action Plan Progress Report	
		24 month Action Plan Progress Report	

		36 month Action Plan Progress Report	
2	Recommendation	Unity Identity/Faculty Succession	
	<p>Action #2</p> <p>Craft a strong unit identity/messaging that can be used for internal and external communications (collaboration and recruitment) based concretely in the four themes (global cultures and diversity, global governance and justice, global political economy and development, global environment and sustainability); make program learning outcomes explicit within INTS core course syllabi</p> <p>Develop an administrative workload plan that is equitable and implement faculty retention strategies</p>	<p>With recent faculty changes due to two recent hirings and one retirement in the department the program is currently in a renewal phase. New courses are being developed and the next department retreat (to take place September 2024) will focus on developing a renewed unit identity and revised communication strategies.</p> <p>A “What to do with a Global and International Studies Degree” event bringing together current students and program alumni has been organized by Dr. Heather Smith for March 18, 2024.</p> <p>All faculty and instructors teaching within the program who currently do not include program learning outcomes within their syllabi will be advised to do so at the March 2024 department meeting. Mentorship and resources will be provided and outcomes will be reviewed collectively prior to the 2024-2025 academic year.</p> <p>Discussion is ongoing with senior administration regarding equitable workload planning and research supports for faculty retention.</p>	
	Person(s) Responsible	Department Chair, Full time Department Members, Senior Instructors and Sessional Instructors	
	Target Implementation Date	January 2025	
	Implementation Details	12 month Action Plan Progress Report	
		24 month Action Plan Progress Report	
		36 month Action Plan Progress Report	

3	Recommendation	BA Program	
	<p>Action #3</p> <p>Reduce required credits on par with other faculty programs; develop a new INTS or Faculty-wide 300 level class featuring applied practice/professionalization as a means for building a cohort and to provide a unique offering; consider revenue generation opportunities such as continuing education certificated for language learning and/or “plus one” direct entry programs. Work with other departments towards future joint hires. Update and revise the on-line calendar for the major and joint minors,</p>	<p>The department will revisit current required credits and assess the benefits of reducing these requirements at the department at the retreat in September 2024.</p> <p>Discussions are ongoing at the department level, the faculty level, and with senior administration on the merits of implementing a professionalization course. Following these consultations this recommendation will be assessed at the September 2024 retreat.</p> <p>The merits of developing language courses via continuing education will be discussed at the March 2024 department meeting and assessed at the September 2024 retreat.</p> <p>Revisions to the calendar are ongoing and will be assessed at the September 2024 retreat.</p> <p>The department is open to any and all possibilities regarding future joint hires as relevant positions become available.</p>	
	Person(s) Responsible	Department Chair, Full time Department Members, Senior Instructors and Sessional Instructors	
	Target Implementation Date	January 2025	
	Implementation Details	12 month Action Plan Progress Report	
		24 month Action Plan Progress Report	
		36 month Action Plan Progress Report	

FOLLOW UP DATES

As per the *External Review of Degree Program(s) Procedures*, the Academic Administrative Units are responsible for submitting Action Plan Progress Reports to the Dean on the following dates:

- 12 month Action Plan Progress Report: __30 March 2025_____
- 24 month Action Plan Progress Report: __30 March 2026_____
- 36 month Action Plan Progress Report: __30 March 2027_____

PART 3 – DEAN’S AND PROVOST AND VICE PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC’S RESPONSES

I. Summary of the Degree Program Review Process

Following a lengthy process of finding external reviewers, Professors Sara Matthews (Wilfrid Laurier), Laura Parisi (Victoria), and David Casperson (UNBC) performed their on-site review of the Global and International Studies program on September 19-20, 2023. Their final report, submitted on November 23, 2023, identified a number of major strengths which themselves reflect past and ongoing efforts, initiatives, and revisions by program members and the past Program Chair. Areas of weakness were also identified, shaping the above action plan that aspires to a culture of continuous improvement within the program.

II. Dean’s Response to the Recommendations and Action Plan

April 5, 2024

I agree with the department in considering the external review findings and recommendations as both fair and comprehensive. I would also like to thank the reviewers for their time, care, attention, and detail in helping us strengthen and advance the program of Global and International Studies at UNBC.

The proposed actions and responses seem reasonable to me; they align well with the reviewers’ recommendation to address ‘future direction’ and ‘significant areas of weakness’. It is important to emphasize that the program has been active since receiving the final report in addressing many of the recommendations outlined, which has helped focus the action plan around three main areas to be assessed over the next 12, 24, and 36 months.

A number of curricular recommendations were made to help strengthen and clarify the program objectives and outcomes. From restructuring the course-based MA to introducing clear and coherent learning outcomes (BA and MA), good suggestions were made also to improve the clarity and student appeal of joint majors and minors. Some of this work is already underway within the program, with many of the activities outlined under Action item #1 (above) already having been initiated and set to continue into 2025.

The second proposed action concerned identity – both internal and external. For reporting and assessment purposes, I would add a few more measures to the proposed activities for purposes of clarity and accountability. The program’s awareness session held in March 2024 demonstrates good incentive and foresight, as does the planned learning outcome activity. More detail should be provided to the communications and marketing strategies mentioned above, however, particularly on how this action might be advanced at the September 2024 program retreat, and importantly, how progress will be identified and measured within the program and Faculty. The idea of ‘unit identity’ will be critical in this regard, with some direct connection to advertising and enrolment strategy going forward.

The third proposed action concerns a selection of more technical matters. Some have already garnered program attention, with plans for future decisions in the coming calendar year.

To this list of three actions, I would add two additional recommendations to be addressed and formally assessed in the coming years:

1. The most significant proposal concerns a thorough assessment of language courses in the program, namely the teaching of French, Spanish, and Japanese. The reviewers recommended pursuing international language certification opportunities through the new Japanese Language and Culture minor. Noting the significant draw on financial resources, the reviewers also recommended a ‘renewed focus on the value of language learning’ across the University. Student enrolment numbers in almost all INTS language courses are lower than expected and therefore demand a swift resolution on their future in the program, and the program’s ability to continue supporting them on a regular basis. The possibility of leveraging existing courses through Continuing Studies offers a possible avenue for more sustainable offerings that in turn will benefit more students, the program, and the Faculty. To this end, and acknowledging the importance of languages in education and across the University, I would like to see a fulsome plan devised on possible options in time for Fall 2025 implementation. Again, the goal is to create a more sustainable model that balances student opportunities and experiences with the needs and realities of the academic program and its current faculty complement.
2. The subject of enrolment must be introduced for further and more in-depth consideration. The reviewers commented on historic trends at UNBC and other institutions more widely in the discipline of Global and International Studies, noting that decline is unfortunately standard across the field in Canada and beyond. That said, the number of low enrolment courses at the second-, third-, and fourth-year level within the program at UNBC cannot be delegated to the realm of marketing and recruitment for support or change. I therefore recommend that a fifth action be devised that harnesses ongoing curriculum renewal of the undergraduate program with defined course- and program-based learning outcomes, and a clear study pathway through the degree. Such a model should ideally include a clear rotation of elective courses, potentially fewer courses/year for a more streamlined suite of offerings, and less reliance on part-time instruction. A plan could be reasonably developed in the first 12 months post-review, for possible implementation in Fall 2025.

III. Provost and Vice President, Academic’s Response to the Recommendations and Action Plan (17 June 2024)

Thank you to the reviewers, the department, chair and dean for their participation in the Global & International Studies (INTS) program review process. This important and regular required program review ensures the existing and future high quality academic integrity in the INTS program.

I have carefully read the reviewers' report, the departmental response, and the decanal response. The May 15, 2024, meeting with the dean and chair provided important additional context. I want to underscore the authority and responsibility of the chair and dean for considering and actioning relevant changes considering the external recommendations. I broadly agree with the recommendations and note the department has begun considering some of the sub-recommendations noted by the reviewers. The chair and department is to be commended for being proactive in this regard.

The reviewers outlined four recommendations, and the department responded directly to three of the items. I noted the dean also emphasized a need to reflect on the language courses and overall program enrolment. Overall, I support the recommendations and responses from the reviewers and the department. I also support the recommendations of the dean for the program to review the language courses and enrolment initiatives. Program learning outcomes will support three of the recommendations, and so I encourage the department to engage with rearticulating these. Acting upon these recommendations in light UNBC's strategic plan READY and strategic enrolment management needs will assist in ensuring a vibrant INTS program.

As is usually the case, the external reviewers have made recommendations that have some degree of resource implications. Whereas I again broadly support suggestions for growth, recommendations that require acquiring new resources or reallocation of resources will take some time to achieve. I note the need for long term planning of the faculty complement that aligns with the strategic direction and goals of the department and faculty.

I look forward to seeing the department's continued work on refining its strategic goals and direction. I applaud early efforts to engage in discussions that will yield the goals and the pathways to achieve them.