

March 24, 2022

To: University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction (UCUI) and Elaine Carey, Dean,
College of Arts of Sciences

From: Paul Kubicek, Director, International Studies Program

Re: Response to Review of Ten-Year Self-Study Report

I have read the report of Patrick O'Neill to the International Studies Program Self-Study. I appreciate this thorough and thoughtful comments, and his effort to add a broader context to some of the concerns I noted in my original report. For the most part, he agrees with my assessment of the limitations and challenges facing the program in terms of attracting students, offering sufficient courses, and distinguishing itself from the larger International Relations major offered by Political Science. As I noted, these are small, limited programs, and they rely heavily upon various departments offering sufficient courses to complete a major. I am also concerned that the reliance on "complementary area" to make up for the dearth of offerings in the primary area is a real problem. I had hoped the reviewer would offer some suggestions that might directly address some of these issues.

The main points he raises are offering the major as a dual degree program or some sort of 4+1 option. The dual degree option is, of course, available, and some ISP majors have had double majors, although at times the overlap between the two (e.g., Japanese Language and Japanese Studies or Spanish Language and Latin American Studies) is significant and one wonders what the value-added of the second degree is. Given the language requirement for the ISP major, it is really a 60-credit major (44 count directly and 16 credits come from first- and second-year language study that does not count for the major), making a pairing with other majors tricky. I would note that the most logical pairing might be International Relations (a social science, non-regional program) paired with an area-studies focused ISP major, but to date we have seen few students with an IR major and an ISP minor, making me think there are not many would who seek a double major in this form. The idea to end ISP stand-alone majors and offer them only if paired with another major might make some sense, and it could be tailored to student's interests, but it would not grow the program or increase ISP's visibility. As for a 4 +1, that would be appropriate for a masters program, which I do not think makes sense for Oakland (larger, much more established area studies masters programs exist at UM and MSU). The suggestion for a Peace Corps Prep certificate is intriguing (I believe Western Michigan offers something like this), but could possibly require the creation of new courses and could arguably be better situated in the IR major, where courses on politics and economic development are offered.

I do hope that this process leads to a fruitful discussion on how we can invigorate the ISP at OU.