

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES MAJOR
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I. Executive Summary

Nota bene: Professor Lumumba-Kasongo was on leave for Spring 2014. This report is basically a reflection on the past activities and future planning for the International Studies major. Although Professor Lumumba-Kasongo was on sabbatical leave, he participated in the Model United Nations National Conference for one day in New York City in April 2014. The conference itself was held for one week. He also read and graded all the papers written for independent studies of the students who participated in the conference and who took Political Science 210 (Model United Nations).

International Studies major is in the transition. It is in the fall 2013 that some aspects of the new curriculum started to be implemented. The last course, which is part of its curriculum, was approved only in the Spring 2014. The new focus is based on cultural and geo-political regions. The curriculum is divided into one global category and 5 geo-political and cultural subregions of the world. Each student has to take a certain required number of courses from, at least, two subregions. While 4 sub-regions are geopolitically defined (Africa, Asia, Europe, South America and the Caribbean), the indigenous category is transnational. Thus, the intent is to use both comparative perspectives and global approaches to critically examine and understand the world. The curriculum underlines the need to provide skills and specific and general knowledge systems that have comparative, international, and global values and which are relevant to the exigencies of the new economy of innovations and imperatives of multiculturalism and multipolarity. The new curriculum is more flexible in terms of prerequisite for the required courses and the past restrictive foreign language requirements. Cultural dimensions of global and subregional experiences replace this last requirement.

This new cultural and geopolitical orientations are reflected in all the aspects of the senior experiences: senior seminars, senior theses, internships, comprehensive exams, public presentations and study abroad.

The old International Studies major graduated 3 students in the Spring 2014 two of whom had distinction. In general, most students who have been interested in the International Studies major have been highly self-motivated with a high level of enthusiasm about the value of higher education.

The senior thesis is written through International Studies 402, which is still a one-semester work offered either in the Fall or the Spring of the senior year.

Our seniors are well prepared to complete their program without any major problems. The comprehensive exam has been one of the most important tools to assess the quality of what has been learnt during the four years at Wells. The senior thesis is another instrument.

Several students have declared their majors in the new International Studies major. However, in 2014-2015, we might not have any graduating seniors as the new program started in 2013.

II. Plans for Coming Year

International Studies major has always been visible on campus through its International Studies curriculum series through which we invite scholars and students to make public presentations. And also one of the requirements of the internships is a public presentation on the topic of the internship. We will continue with this requirement. On off-campus learning opportunities, the major shares the vision with the Political Science major and we encourage students to join the Model United Nations (POLSC 210), which is expanding as its demand is increasing. This will create a problem as Professor Lumumba-Kasongo has been teaching it in more than 19 years as an unpaid overload. The physical time spent for it might not allow him to continue to teach it in this way.

We will encourage students to get more involved in the Celebrating Scholarship and Engagement Day in presenting their research projects.

The number of students who are taking International Studies 151 is consistently high. But this does not indicate whether or not old trends for, or interests in, majoring in international studies will significantly change. We have to wait and see what would happen in the next few years. However, it should be noted that the constant trend is that students who major in International Studies are mostly studious with a high level of enthusiasm about the major and the prospect for future careers.

While Professor Lumumba-Kasongo was on sabbatical leave, Professor Susan Tabrizi invited a few scholars on campus to give public lectures.

The major activity undertaken by our students was their participation in the Model United Nations National Conference in New York City for a week. This is a full year activity. There were more than 3,000 students who attended the conference in New York City who came from all over the world representing many countries. Wells had 15 students who represented Kenya in this conference. We will continue the recruitment new members in the fall 2014.

III. Updated Assessment Plan

The new International Studies major started to be implemented in the fall 2013. It is perhaps during the academic year 2014/15 that we might use the EPC guidelines to assess more effectively the evolution of the major. One of the problems with International Studies major is that since it was created about 19 years ago, it has been mainly managed and supported by one single faculty member. The new planning should be to have more faculty members interested in joining the major as advisors. During the academic year 2014/15, we should explore possibility of using guidelines developed by EPC for assessing the needs of the department. One of the sub-regions that was initially part of the new curriculum is Middle East. We were obliged to drop it off because there is no faculty who is focusing on this subregion at Wells. Professor Lumumba-Kasongo teaches many topics related to this subregion in his international relations and comparative politics courses. However, this is not enough. We need to have an expert who can offer a variety of courses in this area.