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MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION	Senate	DATE	September 19, 2024
FROM	Dilson Rassier, Provost and Vice-President Academic, and Chair, SCUP	PAGES	1/30
RE:	External Review Report for the School for International Studies (SCUP 24-41)		

At its meeting on September 11, 2024, SCUP reviewed and approved the Action Plan for the School for International Studies that resulted from its External Review.

The Educational Goals Assessment Plan was reviewed and is attached for the information of Senate.

Motion: That Senate approve the Action Plan for the School for International Studies that resulted from its external review.


C: Elizabeth Cooper, Director & Undergraduate Chair, School for International Studies

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MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION Dilson Rassier, Chair, SCUP
FROM Peter Hall, Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-
President, Academic 
RE: External Review of the School for International Studies
DATE August 21, 2024
PAGES

Attached are the External Review Report and the Action Plan for the School for International Studies. The Educational Goals Assessment Plan and constructive feedback from SCUTL are included for information only. The site visit took place at the Vancouver campus from February 26-28, 2024. The external review committee met with students, faculty, staff, and senior administrators.

Excerpt from the External Review Report:

"The interdisciplinary nature of SIS was a crucial strength of the unit that is reflected in the diverse faculty, the broad undergraduate curriculum, and the MAIS program. In terms of research and teaching, SIS's engagement with real-world problems through specific and deep empirical cases distinguishes it from other disciplinary cognate fields (political science, anthropology, labour studies, sociology, gender and sexuality studies, etc.). The quality of faculty research is high, led by two distinguished research chairs who are overperforming, a number of incredibly productive and influential new hires, and a strong core of mid-career scholars. The students universally appreciated the perspicacity of course offerings (although wanted more stability in the elective offerings) and appreciated the faculty's depth of knowledge and enthusiasm for teaching. The diversity of faculty specializations and backgrounds should also be noted as a strength, and a triumph that will lead to the long-term success of the School."

Following the site visit, the report of the External Review Committee* for the School for International Studies was submitted in March 2024. The reviewers made a number of recommendations based on the Terms of Reference that were provided to them. Subsequently, a meeting was held with the dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the director of the School for International Studies, and director of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance to consider the recommendations. An action plan was prepared taking into consideration the discussion at the meeting and the contents of the external review report. The action plan has been endorsed by the school and the faculty dean.

Motion:

That SCUP approve and recommend to Senate the Action Plan for the School for International Studies that resulted from its external review.

*External Review Committee:

Mark Salter, University of Ottawa (Chair of External Review Committee)
Kimberley Manning, Concordia University
Rachel Silvey, University of Toronto
Katherine Reilly (internal), Simon Fraser University

Attachments:

1. External Review Report (March 2024)
2. School for International Studies Action Plan
3. School for International Studies Educational Goals Assessment Plan
4. Feedback on Educational Goals Assessment Plan

cc Laurel Weldon, Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Elizabeth Cooper, Director, School for International Studies

School for International Studies , Simon Fraser University

External Review Committee Report

Mark B. Salter, Chair (University of Ottawa)

Kimberley Manning (Concordia University)

Rachel Silvey (University of Toronto)

Katherine Reilly (Simon Fraser University)

The review committee assessed the unit and this report comments on its strengths and weaknesses, and on opportunities for improvement. The report makes recommendations that address major challenges and opportunities.

Introduction

We are grateful to the faculty, students, staff, and university leadership of the School for International Studies (SIS) for their time, deep thought, candor, and labour in producing a comprehensive self-report, and for hosting three invigorating days of in-person meetings. In order to maximize the impact of this arms-length report, we provide a high-level SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunities, threats) analysis before moving to the six questions posed directly by the terms of reference.

The School for International Studies is an inter-, pluri- and multidisciplinary unit at SFU that offers both undergraduate and MA degrees in international studies. Different from area studies, international relations, comparative politics, development, or comparative and world literature, SIS distinguishes itself by being ecumenical, focused on analyzing the constitution of the international through various networks, connections, and discourses, attentive to the connections between the local and the global. Although SIS is a small unit the School produces a highly competitive educational experience and impactful research profile. The School has recently undergone a significant refresh of its faculty cohort, and some deep strategic thought about next steps.

Strengths

Interdisciplinarity: The interdisciplinary nature of SIS was a crucial strength of the unit that is reflected in the diverse faculty, the broad undergraduate curriculum, and the MAIS program. In terms of research and teaching, SIS's engagement with real-world problems through specific and deep empirical cases distinguishes it from other disciplinary cognate fields (political science, anthropology, labour studies, sociology, gender and sexuality studies, etc.). The quality of faculty research is high, led by two distinguished research chairs who are overperforming, a number of incredibly productive and influential new hires, and a strong core of mid-career scholars. The students universally appreciated the perspicacity of course offerings (although wanted more stability in the elective offerings) and appreciated the faculty's depth of knowledge and enthusiasm for teaching. The diversity of faculty specializations and backgrounds should also be noted as a strength, and a triumph that will lead to the long-term success of the School. We see no evidence of, nor rationale for, a plan to merge the School with other units. However, a clearer articulation of how the SIS is differentiated from other units in its substance will be an important marker to the University, the Faculty, and to itself to assure its long-term independence. There nonetheless exist potential gains to be achieved from an administrative federation with other, cognate critical units (Policy Studies, Urban Studies, Global Asia, Labour Studies, etc.). The unit's signature interdisciplinarity could also be supported by team-taught courses or blended learning courses with international partners.

Culture: The atmosphere of collegiality was notable and remarked upon by faculty, students and support staff alike. Graduate and undergraduate students reported feeling supported by staff (with particular appreciation for the recent hire in career support and professional development), challenged in their coursework, and mentored by faculty. The excellent and caring work of the administrative staff towards both students and faculty is exceptional. (The administrative staff should be nominated for a Staff Achievement Award as a team or individual.) The collegial culture amongst faculty was also universally appreciated, with the monthly school research colloquium being the best visible practice of that collegiality, particularly because it encompasses core faculty, postdocs, and LTLs. While students, particularly undergraduate students, lacked a dedicated social space, the renovated graduate student commons space was plainly well-used and an important hub for scholarly and social community building, leading to a strong sense of "cohort".

Research Excellence: We also want to highlight the research excellence of the unit. We were all deeply impressed by the productivity of the School's scholars, evidenced by the recent publication of a number of monographs by major university presses, some of which have had a significant impact on their

respective fields. The unit's two endowed research chairs are further evidence of the specific in-house research excellence and its broader appeal, and we see opportunities for the university to build. The fact that SIS has recruited and hired such an extraordinary team of researchers is a testament to the collective project of SIS, and its ongoing potential as a leader in the field of interdisciplinary international studies. The fact that one former student felt like they were "over-prepared" for their graduate studies at one of the world's top universities, speaks volumes about the strength of the training that students are receiving through SIS.

Weaknesses

Governance: If collegiality is a dominant characteristic of this department, it was our strong impression that, in the past, the informal culture of collegiality had done the work of formal rules, open group discussions, and transparent processes. It is our view that new professors must have a robust on-boarding process so that they have a clear sense of roles, systems, policies, and expectations. In any system, but particularly in a flat, democratic system for promotion and merit pay as we see at SFU, tenure, promotion and merit within a small unit should be a group responsibility, not an individual task. Correspondingly, there should be a feminist, inclusive professional development program that institutionalizes the excellent individual mentoring done by the recent directors. We welcome the renewal of the unit's corpus of rules and procedures and the move towards transparency and equity, and the leadership shown by the two full professors who have added to their workloads to spearhead this transformation. However, it is unsustainable to ask endowed research chairs to take on senior administrative roles, and we are mindful that – across the sector, historically, there has been a trend of distributing service labour in gendered and racialized patterns that compromise the ability of historically marginalized individuals and groups to achieve promotion to full professor in an equitable timeframe. This is not to diminish the possible role of associate professors as leaders but rather to acknowledge that, in order to avoid repeating past patterns, the Dean and the School collegium must be mindful and purposeful in their leadership choices so that service and leadership roles are well supported and do not contribute to individual-level career disadvantage. And, it is imperative that the School continue its tradition of protecting junior scholars from service burn-out. Service should be understood as a group responsibility rather than exclusively the responsibility of the Director. Only a transparent and clear process and long-term plan for allocating service responsibilities will allow the question of equity in service allocations to be resolved. Given that the next director should lead an undergraduate curriculum evaluation as well as a revitalization of the school's mission, neither of which is a small task, the work of formalizing service expectations should begin as soon as possible.

Recruitment. We understand SIS to be a hidden gem at SFU with an active, engaged, and supportive faculty providing top quality, unique education for excellent students, supported by thoughtful and dedicated administrative staff. Average completion time is below the faculty average, and the MA program brings in a high proportion of international students. We were impressed that SFU does not charge differential tuition for foreign students! From a value point-of-view, both graduate and undergraduate programs are under-recognized and undersubscribed. While we appreciate that faculty have been doing individual recruiting from the side of their desk, this program deserves the full support of the Dean and the Provost to ensure that there is a sustainable number of high-quality students who know about both the undergraduate and Master's programs. Our understanding is that the award of future faculty lines is dependent upon the capacity of the program to attract more students at the undergraduate level. We want to emphasize, however, that the unit is unlikely to be able to grow to the next level without an increase of support and attention from the upper levels of the administration.

Opportunities

Local-Global: SIS is located at the node of many local and global networks, and while individual faculty are also engaged in local and global partnerships there seems to be little engagement with the lived-life of SFU's downtown campus and its connections to the global. An introductory course on the international connections of the local (The World in Vancouver, Vancouver in the World? Wicked Problems in Vancouver and the Globe? Global Foodways in Vancouver?) would be an extraordinary asset to the program and a draw in future students who want to connect Canada's engaged university to the Global Agenda. The international is constituted not only by governments at the level of foreign policy, but by commercial actors (YVR, Vancouver Port or the Trans Mountain Pipeline) as well as private and not-for-profit actors (including think tanks such as the Asia Pacific Foundation) and among sub-national authorities on transversal issues like the environment or climate. (There are embedded international actors in the BC Dept. of Forestry, connecting with them seems a natural opportunity.) Here is where an internationally-oriented engaged school, particularly with strategic partnerships with researchers and activists across the university, could really leverage the specificity of the downtown campus, the faculty complement, and local connections (like Consular Connections). Here is an opportunity to demonstrate how the signal value of "interdisciplinarity" is manifest in a particular modality, disposition or perspective, a unique set of analytical tools, or a specific pluridisciplinary method. Each of the comparator schools (6.2 below) are also interdisciplinary and have a larger faculty complement. There is a tremendous opportunity for SIS to more powerfully demonstrate and communicate the substantive

differences between itself and other similar programs, especially in an increasingly crowded field of degree-granting institutions.

Diversity, Decolonization, and Belonging: The School has a diverse faculty, a diverse and international student population, and a global perspective. There is a need to support, celebrate, and encourage that diversity, and every opportunity to leverage that diversity for a deeper exploration of the decolonization of area studies and other disciplinary formations. In particular, community engagement with local groups that represent both First Nations and Indigenous peoples as well as diasporic communities old and new will help connect the School to its larger immediate community. Because Indigenous peoples in BC and Vancouver have had such an important international impact, and are connected along a number of Indigenous networks, significant potential exists in reflecting upon those global and international connections in course offerings – there are multiple “special topics” codes, for example, that could be specified as having Indigenous content (if not connection to Indigenous knowledge keepers) to add content without adding to the course catalogue. This would be an important development in an undergraduate curriculum review.

Threats

Teaching: Many of the core undergraduate courses, including the entry-level attractor courses like 101 and more advanced core courses like 300 and 350, are taught by Limited Term Lecturers. Without any implied or explicit criticism of the teaching staff, an over-reliance on LTLs to teach a large proportion of the program represents a vulnerability to the coherence and distinctiveness of undergraduate course offerings. Students report appreciating the writing-intensive and methods courses, but the breadth of social science methodologies (even methodological literacy) is hard to cover along with quantitative and qualitative methods. The writing intensive course (350) also gets very positive feedback, and it seems crucial that this be taught by core or long-term faculty. While the intimate size of the graduate program creates amazing student experiences and rewarding opportunities for faculty, the small scale represents a significant investment of core faculty teaching resources. And the recent rapid decline of applications is surprising and troubling. A full-court press must be made by the School, Faculty, and Provost to maximize the applications to this program. The MA program merits growth and investment.

Modern collegiality: Every unit and institution faces a challenge in finding a balance between the desire to maintain positive aspects of legacy culture and the imperative to evolve as personnel and environmental conditions change. Within the decentralized structure of SFU, SIS is the guardian of its own culture, and the large turn-over in faculty and staff that the School has recently experienced offers an opportunity for focused reflection. Unexamined cultural norms can kill strategy, and so the School's values must be shared, clear, and actionable. A robust, systematized on-boarding process and a mentorship plan that is focused on action (rather than ideology) is crucial to transmitting the School's values and processes to new faculty. A contemporary understanding of collegiality that focuses on process and transparency will be more sustainable than an older model of collegiality that might reproduce gendered divisions of labour and a less-than-team-centric view of support staff (being collegial is not simply a relationship amongst faculty, but needs to include all of the members of the School's community, including support and administrative staff). Clear hiring matrices, conflict of interest guidelines, and inclusive leadership will lead to the longer-term health, sustainability, and potentially growth of the small, intimate unit (to that end, the unit may want to consider inviting long-term LTL's to department meetings). Given the service burdens of staff and faculty, the best way to build that shared vision and sense of equity amongst both teams is to be clear about expectations, values, and respect that lead to concrete actions.

Environment: In terms of cost of living, climate, and the secondary education sector, SFU's SIS faces several external vectors of instability. Long-term under-funding by the government coupled with a high and increasing cost of living in the lower mainland places pressure on the student body (and faculty). SFU's commitment to a guaranteed funding package for doctoral students is important and admirable; however, for the SIS MA program, this budget decision leads to an external cap on the number of MA students who can acquire funding. Because of the strength of the program and the students, we urge the Dean, Associate Dean Research, Vice President Research and Innovation to align incentives to encourage SIS faculty to apply for more grants with external funding to support more graduate students. This is one method of increasing the size of the program while maintaining the values of the institution.

Issues of Specific Interest

6.1 What do you see as the unique strength of the School for International Studies? How might we augment these distinctive elements and potentially consider them in new ways? Are we currently communicating our strengths in effective ways to prospective and current students and collaborators.

- The School for International Studies does present a unique, interdisciplinary program for undergraduates and master's students that merits greater publicity and reputation. While individual faculty members can boast incredible strength and reach, the School as a entity seems not to enjoy the position of its individual members. Internally, there is a great deal of collegial support, which leads to an enriching of the intellectual life of the unit and the individual success of faculty, but does not yet seem to produce a synergy. While the three 'streams' make intellectual sense, they do not reflect the current faculty strengths nor the core faculty teaching/research interests, and, so in marketing those three streams cannot be part of a pitch for distinction. We would, instead, recommend continuing to rethink this 'stream' model as part of a larger rationalization and up-dating of the undergraduate curriculum to reflect the refreshed current faculty cohort (p. 26 self-study). We also recommend below that SFU, the Provost, and the Dean all engage with the School and its Director to better publicize the School and highlight its unique approach to studying international problems as a signal of SFU's Global Engagement initiative and an exemplar of the "engaged" university.

6.2 Are there particularly good models or initiatives being implemented by other small International Studies programs that we might learn from.

- We would identify the nearest Canadian comparators: Norm Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University; Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa, Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, University of Toronto; The School of Public Policy and Global Affairs at University of British Columbia, Global Studies at UBC Okanagan and perhaps the Balsillie School of International Affairs, University of Waterloo and Laurier University. While all of these programs are interdisciplinary and can boast intensely engaged public and academic researchers, only UBC located in the same kind of global hub that Vancouver is, and so that particularly deserves engagement. GSPIA and NPSIA take advantage of their location close to government, and SIS cannot compete on proximity to Global Affairs Canada and must take advantage of its unique location. While SPPGA, GSPIA, NPSIA and Balsillie all pride themselves on policy engagement, SIS's engagement with local and global

diaspora, global networks of connection and concern, and ideas is unique and should be developed and marketed. These comparators are also much larger than SIS (SPGA-UBC 28 core faculty, 75 affiliates; NPSIA-Carleton 21 core faculty, 14 LTLS, 12 adjuncts; GSPIA-uOttawa 28 core faculty, 8 part time, 10 visiting professors; Munk; UofT 60 faculty) and so can take administrative advantage of economies of scale. A much smaller program, but none-the-less potential competitor, is Global Studies at UBC Okanagan for local students. All comparators, with the exception of Okanagan, offer co-op or internships at the MA level. However, none of these programs offer (1) the same value-for-money, no fee difference between foreign and Canadian tuition, (2) small class size and individual attention, (3) disciplinary openness both in admissions and in pursuit (including a lack of economics prerequisites), and (3) being embedded in Vancouver (save SPPGA). We think that part of the mission/marketing exercise should include setting out the distinct and unique character of SIS for audiences internal and external.

- SFU and uOttawa both have “field schools,” which are centrally-supported, short-term intensive programs for international experience. There is no reason why SIS could not be involved in field courses (particularly in the areas of faculty strength) and provide students on-ramps to international experiences.

- Comparators also have strong public-facing programming, and given the strength of faculty research, we support the School’s efforts to engage its community, while there are gains to be had on enlarging that project. Given that so many comparators face the government, there is a market opportunity for SIS to highlight another orientation.

6.3 Being mindful of our limited faculty strength, what do you think is missing from our undergraduate curriculum, or alternatively, what does not seem to be working well in the curriculum?

- We do not conceive of SIS as an area studies program, or indeed indebted to any discipline’s expectation about “coverage” and that should liberate the School to be creative in its hires and its teaching (as it has done in its recent amazing hires). As such, as a committee, we are less concerned with what might be missing (Latin America, History, etc.), and instead want to emphasize the possibilities that are available from centering “the international” as a unique space and scale that illuminates a host of local-global connections and networks that are less visible from other purely disciplinary points of view. The “stream” model, as it is currently configured, does not seem to be reflective of the current interests or actions of the faculty cohort. The second stream in particular “Comparative World Politics, Culture and Society” seems not to be the teaching or research emphasis of any of the core faculty and “falls between two stools” – it is not a comparative politics major (which itself might be offered in political science) or a world

literatures major (which might itself be offered in World Languages and Literatures). For students, and for the School itself, there is a strong need to clarify what this stream is about, why it is unique, and what particular skills, theories, or perspectives that it offers. Alternately, deemphasizing this stream might liberate a number of new course codes that could be reallocated to reflect new faculty and the new direction of the school.

6.4 What future directions should we be taking the graduate program, especially in term of the balance between academic and professional emphases, and with attention to how to distinguish and market our MA degree?

- Based on the research products of the faculty and teaching emphasis of the Master's program, the current program is an academic program that has an empirical and academic focus, not a professional focus. Comparators like Munk, SPPIA, GSPIA and NPSIA, for example, routinely hire a significant number of senior fellows that are retired bureaucrats, career politicians, or non-governmental analysts, to teach professionally-oriented courses. To engage in this kind of professional degree would require a rethinking of the SIS, its teaching staff, and its structure. However, SIS faculty are interested and engaged in public, policy, and scholarly debates that revolve around empirical issues (which are not exclusively government oriented). That is not to say that there could not be some fruitful synergies between SIS and the School of Public Policy for those researchers interested in global policy problems, but that should be developed in concert with SPP to avoid cannibalization of either program.
- If the educational goals of the SIS are “knowledge of the world, critical assessment skills, understanding of different theories for understanding global politics, and strong practical research skills,” then one could see two potential differentiators: criticality and practicality. First, the comparators are all interested in producing graduates that fit right into the policy environment, and so there is an emphasis on mastering dominant narratives and theories, rather than exploring more critical perspectives. This could be a differentiator for SIS. Second, the comparators all focus on writing policy-oriented briefing notes, research memos, etc. If SIS has a broader view of the international, then it might understand its practical research skills to be much broader (community-oriented action-research, risk assessment for international programs, cultural literacy documents, GBA+ and/or Equity, Diversity, Inclusion training, inter-cultural communication, international project management, comparative policy and comparative systems analysis, etc.). Widening and specifying the notion of “practical” research would be an excellent differentiator.

6.5 How should International Studies relate to other cognate disciplines and interdisciplinary programs, such as communications, geography, global Asia, global humanities, history, political science, public policy, sociology and anthropology, world languages and literatures, and others?

- Faculty and students are already engaged in their home or cognate disciplines. Faculty reported finding allies and collaborators across the faculty of arts and social sciences and the whole university, although students remarked on the difficulty of meeting the requirements of double majors and scheduling across multiple campuses. If SIS could consolidate and communicate its unique differentiators, its more specified and secure identity will lead to greater confidence of cooperation with other cognate disciplines. If there is a value consensus about what differentiates International Studies from International Relations (POLS), World Literatures, or Sociology/Anthropology (i.e., a focus on the “international” and the dispositions of criticality and practicality), then the School will more easily defend its choices.

6.6. What steps can be taken to better coordinate course offering and support interdisciplinary research and engagement activities?

- Faculty, postdocs, and LTLs alike appreciate the research symposium as an intellectual and social enterprise. Students also appreciated the close attention that their projects received, and opportunities to engage with the professors in their individual research (particularly with the research chairs which have more resources to support students). A curriculum review would also allow the new faculty cohort to have some agency in redefining the courses to reflect the really-existing complement. It might also be useful in some cases to include LTL’s in this process, given the reliance on LTLs for teaching in the program.

- To emphasize the interdisciplinary nature of School, we also suggest a monthly public “Wicked Problems” series that would tackle an international wicked problem (poverty, climate, global terrorism, urban planning, water, food) each month from the different perspectives available from faculty. This could even get connected to SFU’s lifelong learning program. Finding ways to develop such a series with other interdisciplinary programs (Gender Studies, Labour Studies, Global Asia) and disciplinary programs (including Urban Studies and Public Policy) might be a way of building stronger ties among your programs for the development of future research teams and potential funding for MA students.

-To emphasize the specificity and embeddedness of SIS in the downtown core with its global connections, we strongly recommend that the School explore strategies for strengthening its local connections (perhaps in conjunction with the School for Public Policy), in order to really ground itself in Vancouver and the globe – with courses, lectures, and community outreach.

Recommendations

1. Undergraduate curriculum and logistics. SIS should engage in a renewal of its undergraduate curriculum (including its stream structure and core branding) to reflect (i) the changing faculty cohort, (ii) the changing local and global context, (iii) and the proportion of core undergraduate courses being taught by part-time or sessional lecturers.
 - a. SIS should explore “6 semester planning” to better plan for elective course offerings (which was mentioned at the undergraduate and graduate level) and to make best intentional use of LTL and core faculty for entry-level and methods courses. We recommend a 3-year LTL to stabilize course offerings and student experience. Given the historical gendered service burdens, we urge SIS to explore if an LTL might be used for administrative support (undergraduate chair for example) to provide stability to the LTLs and protect junior colleagues from burn-out.
 - b. Because SIS is neither an area-studies program, nor an anthropology program, nor a political science program, its curriculum review should reconsider the framing device for their “streams.” One school member described streams as “identifying interest” rather than “manifesting specialized training,” and this seems to be a crucial point: either the streams should be developed and represent actually-existing faculty strength or the students should be given wider choice (and not be required to take extra semesters to finish a degree due to electives that are not offered). This connects to question 6.3 – rather than focus future recruitment on “missing” areas or specializations, the School should consider focusing on the unique value and situatedness of SFU in Vancouver and prioritize “approach” over “area” in planning. There is also an opportunity to do team teaching in a way that would engage students and exemplify the interdisciplinarity of the program.
 - c. Because SIS identifies itself as being dedicated to developing critical thinking skills in relation to real world problems and deep empirical cases, policy and co-op experience are valued by students and any expansion of that project will be appreciated. Students note that the main office is in the downtown campus, but the majority of first year courses are at the Burnaby campus, which might affect registration numbers. Of particular urgency, is the perception that first-year advisors in Arts in the Registrar’s office may be steering students away from the program, because of a higher grade average requirement. The Dean and/or Vice-Dean of Student Affairs should play a role in ensuring that students are

provided with correct and appropriate information regarding possible study paths and that potential students are encouraged to apply to SIS.

2. Graduate curriculum and logistics. The bespoke MA program has high engagement by core faculty and rave reviews from students. We urge the Director and Dean to consider pathways to sustainable, intentional growth in the program. Because of the strength of the MA program and the students, we urge the Dean, Associate Dean Research, Vice President Research and Innovation to align incentives so that SIS faculty apply for more grants with external funding for graduate students so that the size of the program can be increased while maintaining the values of the institution. The question of diverse course offerings will be a persistent challenge when the cohort numbers are so small, which we understand to be a function of both admissions and funding. Rather than a “book over grant” culture, we think that faculty should be encouraged to apply for larger funding envelopes. These soft-funded positions are not only the responsibility of the endowed chairs and affiliated centres, but the opportunity for all faculty to contribute to the cultivation of the excellent student population and attract the best students. Given the strength of the faculty, we have no doubt that with appropriate support from the Vice-President Research and International and the Dean, faculty will be successful at winning grant money that could expand the number of funded MA students, which would then allow for more faculty lines and course offerings. Consideration of a doctoral program should only be made once the sustainability and profitability of the MA program is assured.
3. Graduate Student Recruitment: The School, Faculty, and Provost cannot rely on faculty to undertake graduate student recruitment off the side of their desks, particularly in the current decline of applications. The comparative advantage of low tuition, small class size, and interdisciplinarity should be promoted through a re-vamped and streamlined website. Keeping in mind that the most popular local competitor is likely the UBC School of Public Policy and Global Affairs, the SIS website and recruitment strategies should highlight its distinctive and comparative advantages. SFU should also develop a recruitment strategy that shows the real benefits and values of the interdisciplinary programs available at SFU, including a capacity to approach problems from a multi-faceted perspective. While questions about strategic enrollment happen at an institutional level, questions of immediate support can be answered closer to the unit. The new abilities of the School to support student career development (IS 879) and professional development should be marketed, since this is also a really important differentiator and value-add. Whatever the larger strategic enrolment strategy for SFU, we would urge leadership to put SIS at its heart (recruitment was also highlighted in the external review of the School of Interactive Arts and Technology – indicating that this is an institution-wide challenge).

4. Sustainability. There is already cooperation with the School of Public Policy on the question of co-op, and we urge SIS to consider if further gains could be made by extending that cooperation between the two schools and Urban Studies. We understand there to be administrative gains both in terms of raw support from the Dean and in terms of sharing the service burden, and intellectual gains in the cross-fertilization of like-minded, engaged researchers. A federated unit with multiple, distinct programs can be mutually enriching without unduly constraining. (This is normal at the University of Ottawa where a single unit houses Sociology and Anthropology or Political Studies which houses both political science, public administration, and the international studies and modern languages program). Because of the long-tail of gendered dynamics in service and leadership, and the high burdens of service in a small unit, we feel that there are real gains to be made, should the two or more compatible units agree.



External Review Action Plan

Section A

To be completed by the Responsible Unit Person, e.g., Chair or Director

Unit Under Review: School for International Studies

Date of Review Site Visit: February 26-28, 2024

Responsible Unit Person: Elizabeth Cooper

Faculty Dean: Laurel Weldon

Notes

- It is not expected that every recommendation made by the External Review Committee be covered by this Action Plan. The major thrusts of the report should be identified—some consolidation of the recommendations may be possible while other recommendations of lesser importance may be excluded.*
- Attach the required plan to assess the success of the Educational Goals as a separate document (Senate 2013).*
- Should any additional response be warranted, it should be attached as a separate document.*

1. PROGRAMMING

1.1	Action(s) (description of what is going to be done)
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UNDERGRADUATE

ER Recommendation: “SIS should engage in a renewal of its undergraduate curriculum (including its stream structure and core branding) to reflect (i) the changing faculty cohort, (ii) the changing local and global context, (iii) and the proportion of core undergraduate courses being taught by part-time or sessional lecturers.” (p. 11)

Action:

- SIS has developed a renewed curriculum plan that: a) makes it optional for a student to select a stream as part of the major; b) changes the titles of the 3 streams to better reflect faculty expertise, student interests and global context; c) changes the required LD courses for the 3 streams to better reflect faculty expertise (thereby ensuring more CFLs can teach these core courses and reducing reliance on

SIs/LTLs), student interests and global context. These curriculum changes are being prepared for review by the FASS UCC in Fall 2024 with the hope they will be passed for implementation in Summer 2025.

- As part of the May 2024 Faculty Renewal Plan process, SIS proposed a new Senior Lecturer position that could convert 27.5% of undergraduate teaching recently done by LTLs/SIs to a CFL. The design of this position was informed by careful calculations of which courses are most reliant on LTL/SI teaching as well as the curriculum renewal plan described above. This position (75% SIS; 25% Global Asia) was approved in July 2024 and SIS and Global Asia are in the process of trying to fill it for Fall 2025.
- SIS will continue to work with FASS Communications to communicate to prospective students the strengths of its undergraduate program.

ER Recommendation: SIS should consider developing a field school (as a “centrally-supported, short-term intensive programs for international experience” p. 8) that could help recruit students to the program and enhance their learning experience.

Action:

- SIS faculty members prepared a concept note for a IS field school in Tanzania that builds from the existing field school there, as well as their own extensive regional expertise and networks. In Summer 2024, first meetings to discuss the proposal were held between the SIS team and SFU International and SFU’s Vice President, Research and Innovation, as well as separately with the FASS Dean. The SIS team is now preparing a workplan and more detailed proposal for SFU offices to propose to an external funder.

ER Recommendation: SIS should consider focusing on situatedness of SFU in Vancouver, e.g. through developing a new ‘Global Vancouver’ course.

Action:

- SIS is interested in this idea, however, does not yet have a CFL who is ready to develop such a course. The new CFL position approved in Summer 2024 could potentially help SIS develop this course.
- SIS also recognizes there are other units that potentially have expertise in this area (e.g. Urban Studies; Global Asia); as such, SIS will pursue conversations with those units to discuss such a course and any potential collaboration in its design, instruction, and/or advertising among students.

ER Recommendation: SIS could consider developing a team-taught course, and ideally at the lower division level.

Action:

- SIS faculty members are interested in this idea and have discussed it previously. However, SIS does not yet presently have a CFL who is ready to develop this course. The SIS director will try to recruit a lead CFL for this course development in 2025/26 (because too many CFLs are on leave in 2024/25).
- One challenge related to team-teaching is how to ensure instructors are credited for their work. SIS would need to look for suitable models at SFU to ensure instructors are satisfactorily credited.

ER Recommendation: SIS should explore 6 semesters planning to make best uses of LTL and core faculty.

Action:

- SIS already does 6 semesters planning as best we can. However, many changes tend to arise after these plans are made, requiring adjustments (e.g. CFLs become parents, take medical leave, etc.).
- The renewed BA curriculum plan reflects SIS's longer-term planning to ensure core courses are taught more consistently by core faculty (see first action item above).

ER Recommendation: Improve the capacity of SFU central student advisors (i.e. general advisors in Registrar's office at Burnaby campus) to provide appropriate information and encouragement about IS study paths. The ER noted a concern that some general advisors are not doing so.

Action:

- The SIS student advisor has been proactively communicating and seeking meetings with student advisors to ensure their knowledge of IS paths for students.
- In Spring 2024, SIS reviewed our admissions criteria to the major and we are adjusting the number of credits required to declare the IS major to an amount more similar to other units. These will be proposed for FASS UCC approval in Fall 2024 and hopefully advanced for implementation in Summer 2025. This change would be an opportunity to liaise with SFU student advisors to ensure they are apprised of IS paths.
- SIS faculty and staff consistently volunteer to participate in FASS and SFU recruitment events.

GRADUATE

ER Recommendation: "Because of the strength of the MA program and the students, we urge the Dean, Associate Dean Research, Vice President Research and Innovation to align incentives so that SIS faculty apply for more grants with external funding for graduate students so that the size of the program can be increased while maintaining the values of the institution." (p. 12)

Action:

- SIS faculty members have strong records securing external and internal grant funding to support graduate student RAs and provide research mentorship in these arrangements. We agree with the ER recommendation that SIS faculty should continue to seek a diversity of research funding sources and to create new opportunities for IS students to engage with research, and we are committed to pursuing this.

ER Recommendations: "We also recommend below that SFU, the Provost, and the Dean all engage with the School and its Director to better publicize the School and highlight its unique approach to studying international problems as a signal of SFU's Global Engagement initiative and an exemplar of the "engaged" university." (p. 7) "The comparative advantage of low tuition, small class size, and interdisciplinarity should be promoted through a re-vamped and streamlined website. ... SFU should develop a recruitment strategy that shows the real benefits and values of the interdisciplinary programs available at SFU, including a capacity to approach problems from a multi-faceted perspective." (p. 12)

Action:

- SIS is continuing to renew our website (e.g. new professional development content in June 2024, adding student profiles in Summer 2024, etc.). The work of our unit's staff is crucial to this priority.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2023/24 SIS embarked on curriculum review and renewal of the MAIS curriculum to emphasize its distinctive curricular strengths and coherence as well as decrease the required teaching load. The distinctive benefits of the MAIS program under this renewed curriculum, etc. can be emphasized in all communications. • SIS will continue to work with FASS Communications to enhance the advertising of our program's many strengths. The ER noted many distinctive strengths that can be highlighted in such advertising. One key suggestion is to enhance the visibility of the unit's research excellence. This aligns with the FASS Strategic Research Plan (2024-2029) which prioritizes enhancing the visibility of FASS researchers. 	
1.2	Resource Implications (if any)
<p>Most of the action items above do not have additional resource implications.</p> <p>The following three action items have resource implications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting the ER recommendations for decreasing SIS reliance on contract instructors is in part contingent to the creation of a new CFL (Senior Lecturer) position. A new CFL line (75% IS; 25% Global Asia) was secured in July 2024 and the hiring process is underway. • Meeting the ER recommendation to develop a field school will require support from the VP, Research and International, the FASS Dean, as well as a potential external donor (or donors). • Meeting the ER recommendations for additional recruitment assistance to the BAIS and MAIS programs could be positively influenced by accessing additional staff support from FASS and SFU. 	
1.3	Expected Completion Date(s):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most recent Faculty Renewal Plan was completed in Summer 2024 and included a new Senior Lecturer position for SIS (75%) and Global Asia (25%). The hiring process will be conducted in 2024 with an anticipated start date of Fall 2025. • The BA curriculum renewal plan is being prepared for FASS UCC review and we hope it will be approved and implemented by Fall 2026. • The MA curriculum renewal plan is being prepared for FASS GCC review and we hope it will be approved and implemented by Fall 2026. • The proposed field school is in the initial stages of development in Summer 2024. It is possible it will not proceed, but if it does, we hope for a first cohort to begin in Summer 2026. • Continuous student recruitment (i.e. no completion date). 	
2. RESEARCH	
2.1	Action(s) (description of what is going to be done)

ER Recommendation: The ER noted the research excellence of the unit, (p. 2-3) and observed that faculty members at all levels are producing high quality research and are active in multiple research networks and initiatives. The ER noted in several places that SIS's research excellence may not be suitably visible to aid in distinguishing the reputation of the School and recruiting students, and recommended enhancing this visibility.

Action:

- We consider our faculty members' research excellence a priority and a distinctive strength, and we strive to continue our standout record.
- As addressed under the two Graduate Program items above, faculty members are highly motivated to continue competing for a diversity of research funding sources, and to improve how we communicate our individual research strengths as important assets of our unit. As noted above, these priorities align with the FASS Strategic Research Plan (2024-2029) which prioritizes enhancing research activity, reputation, and visibility of FASS researchers internally and externally.

2.2	Resource Implications (if any)
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- Meeting the ER recommendations for enhancing the visibility of our unit's research excellent could be positively influenced by accessing additional staff support from FASS and SFU.

2.3	Expected Completion Date(s)
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- Ongoing.

3. ADMINISTRATION

3.1	Action(s) (description of what is going to be done)
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ER Recommendation: Formalize, through a transparent and clear process, the unit's long-term plan for allocating service responsibilities. The ER specifically noted "the Dean and the School collegium must be mindful and purposeful in their leadership choices so that service and leadership roles are well supported and do not contribute to individual-level career disadvantage." (p. 3)

Action:

- In 2024, SIS re-established Graduate and Undergraduate Committees, each comprising of a Chair and two committee members. The committee structure allows for more distribution of service.
- SIS does not allocate major service roles (UC, GC) to pre-tenured faculty members.
- SIS's current process for service allocations addresses one academic year at a time and the service allocation document is shared with all faculty. SIS will begin to make major (e.g. director, UC and GC) and longer-term (e.g. 2 or 3 year) service allocations a focus of faculty deliberations at one meeting/year so that the unit collaboratively considers how to equitably allocate service roles.
- SIS will more comprehensively outline the descriptions and workloads of the major service roles of director, UC, GC.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The School's Director will continue to communicate clearly with all CFLs that service is a duty that is expected to account for 20% of each member's workload. The previous SIS Secretary/Director's Assistant/Graduate Assistant left the position in April 2024 to take another job. This position provides important support to the Director, Office Manager, and Graduate Chair in particular. The vacancy of this position adds to the heavy workload of the Manager, Graduate Chair and Director. The office manager has been trying to fill this position since April 2024. 	
3.2	Resource Implications (if any)
N/A	
3.3	Expected Completion Date(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hiring for the replacement Secretary/Graduate Program Assistant position was delayed over Spring and Summer 2024 due to CUPE 3338's involuntary transfer process holding up recruitment. The hiring process resumed as of July 12, and we hope to fill this position by September 2024. Ongoing work for other actions. 	
4. WORKING ENVIRONMENT	
4.1	Action(s) (description of what is going to be done)
<p>ER Recommendation: SIS was recognized as a cooperative, collegial workplace. However, the ER expressed some concerns about uneven service loads and the associated potential for burnout and/or unequal career disadvantages (especially in relation to the Director role). As per 3.1. above, the ER suggested more transparent processes for long-term planning of service allocation.</p> <p>Action: See 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition, SIS will pursue discussions with other units to consider potential ways to cooperate that will help share resources and tasks (e.g. recruitment, experiential learning opportunities, etc.) 	
4.2	Resource Implications (if any)
N/A	
4.3	Expected Completion Date(s)
N/A	
5. OTHER: Diversity, Decolonization, and Belonging	

5.1	Action(s) (description of what is going to be done)
<p>ER Recommendation: The ER recommended SIS to continue to support, celebrate, and encourage the School's diversity, and "leverage that diversity for a deeper exploration of the decolonization of area studies and other disciplinary formations. In particular, community engagement with local groups that represent both First Nations and Indigenous peoples as well as diasporic communities old and new will help connect the School to its larger immediate community." (p. 5)</p> <p>Action:</p> <p>SIS faculty and staff are engaged in such initiatives and engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Spring 2024, a IS faculty member was awarded a FASS Reconciliation Grant to hold a series of pedagogical workshops led by Indigenous knowledge holders for faculty and instructors in SIS to advance teaching practices that are grounded in decolonial, anti-racist, and anti-colonial practices. One goal is to potentially develop a course that might be incorporated as part of the Indigenous University Preparation Pathway to attract Indigenous students to our program offerings. • A new IS faculty member is developing the IS 319 Special Topics: Indigenous Futures course into a regular course proposed as IS 3XX: Global Indigenous Futures. This new course proposal will be taken to FASS for approval in Fall 2024. Other IS courses' curriculum have been carefully renewed to ensure further decolonization and particularly inclusion of diverse perspectives, including centering Indigenous knowledge. • In Spring 2024, a new assignment was added to the required MAIS methods course that requires MAIS students to conduct a group assessment of SIS's decolonizing practices for presentation to SIS faculty and staff. This exercise can be continued as a regular form of evaluating ourselves and reaffirming and/or updating our commitments. • An IS faculty member is currently collaborating with a faculty member at SFU Indigenous Studies on a project titled 'Bridging Colonial Experiences: Talking Circles with Indigenous Nations and Newcomer Communities'. • The potential development of a new IS course focused to Global Vancouver would be another promising means to foster decolonization and broader engagement with local Indigenous and diaspora communities. As discussed under 1.1 (Undergraduate) section, this opportunity could be fulfilled by the newly secured Senior Lecturer position and SIS will also explore this idea through conversations with other units about potential cooperation. 	
5.2	Resource Implications (if any)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SIS has already committed funds and staff assistance to support the FASS Reconciliation Grant workshop series with Indigenous knowledge holders. 	
5.3	Expected Completion Date(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The series of pedagogical workshops will be held from Fall 2024 – Spring 2026. A report will be finalized in Fall 2026. • Other work is continuous. 	

The above action plan has been considered by the unit under review and has been discussed and agreed to by the Faculty Dean.

Unit Leader (signed)		Date
Name: <i>Elizabeth Cooper</i>	Title: Dr. Elizabeth Cooper, Director of the School for International Studies	August 19, 2024

Section B

DEAN'S COMMENTS AND ENDORSEMENT OF THE ACTION PLAN

The School of International Studies (SIS) and the external review committee have worked hard to produce an excellent and constructive report, and I am supportive of both the external review report and recommendations and the SIS action plan responding to it. I am gratified that the external review committee lists research excellence and interdisciplinarity as key strengths of SIS. I am inspired by their vision of SIS as a global center of excellence that connects students and faculty to diasporic communities, civil society, public service and other opportunities in public and international affairs. I am glad to see the School take on the goal of increased external funding, especially with an eye to funding more graduate students. I am also pleased to see the priority placed on ensuring students are taught by continuing faculty. The school has already made moves towards reforming the curriculum and offering some of the exciting new courses suggested by the external review committee. The plan for field school development is particularly exciting and fits squarely into the University's and Faculty's strategic directions.

Most of these recommendations can be implemented without more resources from the Dean's Office. Nevertheless, I am happy to commit to additional faculty renewal to enable these goals: Indeed, I have already authorized the hire in question. I am also prepared to work with the FASS Communications and advising teams in Arts Central to see how we can improve recruitment of graduate and undergraduate students for this outstanding programme, and to ensure robust support for SIS students. I am also excited to work with SIS to find greater teaching and administrative efficiencies that will allow faculty to devote more of their time to teaching and research and less to administrative tasks that do not further SFU's strategic objectives.


Faculty Dean (signature)



Date

August 19, 2024

MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION: School of International Studies; SCUP; Senate
FROM: Paul Kingsbury, Special Advisor to the Associate Vice-President, Learning and Teaching and Alice Campbell, Senior Consultant, Program Assessment, Learning Experiences Assessment and Planning 
RE: School of International Studies Action Plan for Educational Goals associated with 2023/24 Mid-cycle Assessment Report
DATE: July 29, 2024

The School of International Studies (SIS) has recently undergone an external review. In addition to developing an action plan in response to the external review team's recommendations, the School has also developed an assessment plan for its Educational Goals (EG). SCUTL has reviewed the assessment plan.

We appreciate this detailed and thoughtful EG assessment plan, which we have reviewed in concert with the External Reviewers' report. The External Reviewers comment favourably on the undergraduate and graduate programs and recommends renewal of both considering SIS' changing faculty complement, and existing strengths and interests. We are heartened to see you discuss these in your assessment plan (as part of the context notes) and describe the changes to your program that you plan to make soon. We hope that you can use the EG assessment process to support this work.

The School's EGs are broad by design and encompass both the undergraduate and graduate programs. Because EGs ideally address learning at the program level, rather than at the School level, we suggest translating these into a set for each of the undergraduate and graduate programs.

For the undergraduate program, SIS plans to revisit the streams (or concentrations – there is inconsistency between the language on the SIS website and in the external review), as is also recommended in the external review, but note that because the EGs are broad, this work won't entail revising them. In addition to defining EGs for the undergraduate program, we suggest that you consider creating EGs for the streams. These would align with the broader SIS EGs and provide a narrower focal point for the revision work and the mapping that will be done by the

stream teams. SIS has several cognate units, as identified in the External Review, which include Political Science, Anthropology, Global Asia. Distinct undergraduate (and stream) EGs, if communicated to prospective students and advisors within FASS, could offer prospective students a clear and differentiated picture of what they stand to gain by applying to major in IS, and by selecting one of the optional streams.

Similarly, a set of EGs customized to the graduate program may help orient the curriculum review, and to guide the conversations about what the core content in the graduate courses is, or should be, and how it helps students to attain the program's EGs.

Given that the program changes are underway, it makes sense to hold off on assessment until they have been implemented, and to use the assessment to gauge how successful they have been. It is wise to focus on the required courses, as you plan on doing. We like the strategy of the instructor reports, embedded into the teaching practice. These reports will describe how well the course, as it is taught, meets the EGs; this seems to be a very helpful reflection to supplement how the course is expected to meet the EGs.

SCUTL members noted that your assessment plan relies heavily on indirect assessment (with direct assessment of EG #3) and advise you to also assess student learning towards the EGs. This would involve identifying indicators within courses that would provide strong evidence of student learning of a specific EG. This may be an assignment, or a component within an assignment. The assessment can be embedded into grading practices. One strategy for doing so is for instructors, when grading, to simply indicate on a 3- or 4-point scale how well the work demonstrates attainment of the EG. It may be that you want to first focus on EG #3, before assessing the other EGs.

Staff in the AVPLT portfolio are well equipped to support you in this work and want to help ensure it is meaningful and manageable for the School. The LEAP (Learning Experiences Assessment and Planning) team supports program and Educational Goals assessment. Their supports include assessment design, quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis, and support with data interpretation. They can be reached at leap@sfu.ca. The Centre for Educational Excellence can help with program revisions and course design, and could potentially help support your upcoming pedagogical workshops. To arrange support, contact Sarah Ford (Educational Developer, CEE, slt5@sfu.ca) and Kanthi Jayasundera (Director, Learning and Teaching Technology Division, CEE, ksj@sfu.ca).

Once again, congratulations on the detailed and thoughtful documentation of your Educational Goals work; we hope that you will find our comments and suggestions both encouraging and helpful.

Educational Goals Assessment Plan

Unit/Program: School for International Studies

Contact name: Elizabeth Cooper

Date: May 27, 2024

This template is designed to help units implement assessment of Educational Goals after receiving feedback from their External Review. Units are not expected to assess every Educational Goal every year. *(Textboxes will expand as you type)*

1) Who were the members of your Educational Goals Assessment team? Outline who has worked on the assessment.

Elizabeth Cooper

2) Are your program’s Educational Goals current, or do any of them need to be revised?

In some cases, Educational Goals may need to be revised to keep pace with changes in the discipline or in the program’s course offerings, or to ensure they continue to align with a unit’s mission and values. Feedback from the External Review may inform revision of Educational Goals.

The Educational Goals are current. The ER did not make any recommendations to reconsider our Educational Goals.

The undergraduate IS major program and the graduate IS master’s program have five educational goals, which are that at the end of the program, students will have:

- 1.) An understanding of the complex contemporary global environment, including the major trends in world history that have shaped this environment and the key institutions of governance that are part of it.
- 2.) A knowledge of pressing contemporary governance challenges in the areas of security and development; and, an ability to critically assess competing theoretical and policy-oriented approaches to understanding and addressing such challenges.
- 3.) An understanding of competing social scientific approaches to knowledge, as they apply to the study of pressing global challenges.
- 4.) Strong practical research skills, including the ability to collect, synthesize, and analyze scholarship and primary data in International Studies, in accordance with established standards of validity and ethics.
- 5.) An ability to communicate ideas and insights about global problems clearly and effectively to diverse audiences, including the policy community, the academic community, and the broader public.

Context note: SIS has seen many changes in our faculty complement over the past few years. Many new faculty have joined the unit. As such, we have been conducting and planning sessions for all faculty to learn more about our existing curriculum and to engage in collaborative planning regarding how we might renew our curriculum

to better reflect existing faculty expertise and meet the changing global context and students’ interests. Sessions during 2023 and 2024 confirmed our commitment to current educational goals and spurred our proposed curriculum renewal plans (described below).

There are four current initiatives that provide opportunities for SIS faculty to consider our educational goals and how we are meeting them:

- 1) SIS Undergraduate Committee is working with 3 small stream teams (3-4 faculty members each) to plan the renewed curriculum (specifically revised LD courses); discussions focus on the scaffolding of our LD course content.
- 2) SIS Graduate Committee has struck a working group (3 faculty members) to plan the renewed curriculum; discussions focus on core content of each course and complementarities.
- 3) SIS has planned a series of pedagogical workshops for CFLs and LTLs. These are scheduled to begin in August 2024 and be held once/term. The August BA-focused workshop will focus on the core content of the LD courses as well as best practices/lessons learned in short written assignments across all BA courses. These are opportunities for instructors to reflect on how the core courses meet our educational goals (and if the educational goals are still appropriate).
- 4) SIS Undergraduate Chair will be renewing all WQB certifications for IS courses over Fall 2024.

3) Is your program’s curriculum map up to date?

A curriculum map may need to be updated to reflect any major changes to the program’s course offerings (i.e. new or substantially revised courses, courses that have been removed).

SIS has developed a renewed curriculum plan that: a) makes it optional for a student to select a stream as part of the major; b) changes the titles of the 3 streams to better reflect faculty expertise, student interests and global context; c) changes the required LD courses for the 3 streams to better reflect faculty expertise (thereby ensuring more CFLs can teach these core courses and reducing reliance on SIs/LTLs), student interests and global context. These curriculum changes were approved by IS faculty in May 2024 and are being prepared for review by the FASS UCC in Fall 2024 with the hope they will be passed for implementation in Summer 2025.

These curriculum changes are consistent with our current Educational Goals.

4) Assessment Plan

For each Educational Goal, outline what data you will use to assess student learning. Indicate what direct evidence you will draw on - which key courses you will sample from and, if possible, the course-based assessments you plan to use. These can be described in general terms (e.g. research paper, final exam questions targeting a particular Educational Goal). Indicate also whether or not you plan to gather indirect evidence (e.g. surveys, focus groups, interviews, etc.). The same indirect evidence method (e.g. a survey) can be used for multiple Educational Goals. Describe what would indicate to you that students had met the Educational Goal. Add or delete rows as needed.

Educational Goal 1:			
Description of Assessment Methods: Following the anticipated implementation of a new BA curriculum in Fall 2025, SIS will request instructors of the required IS LD, UD and graduate courses (excluding IS 300 and IS 830, the required IS methods courses) to complete course-level assessment reports. SIS will use (with some minor revisions) a template used by SIS in 2018/19. In this method, at the start of the course, instructors submit information about how their course is designed to meet IS educational goals and at the end of the course instructors submit reflections on how well they believe the course met those educational goals and what might be modified to improve that alignment.	What would indicate that students had met the EG? Instructor's positive course-level assessment	Is this direct or indirect? Indirect	When do you plan to collect the data? Spring 2026, Fall 2026
Educational Goal 2:			
Description of Assessment Methods: See method under Educational Goals 1; applied to the required IS LD, UD and graduate courses (excluding IS 300 and 830, the required IS methods courses)	What would indicate that students had met the EG? Instructor's positive assessment	Is this direct or indirect? Indirect	When do you plan to collect the data? Spring 2026, Fall 2026
Educational Goal 3:			
See method under Educational Goals 1; applied to required IS LD, UD and graduate courses (excluding IS 300 or 830, the IS required methods courses).	What would indicate that students had met the EG? 1) Satisfactory grades on assignment 2) Instructor's positive assessment	Is this direct or indirect? 1) Direct 2) Indirect	When do you plan to collect the data? Spring 2026; Fall 2026
Educational Goal 4:			
Description of Assessment Methods: See method under Educational Goals 1; applied to IS 300 and IS 830.	What would indicate that students had met the EG? Instructor's positive assessment	Is this direct or indirect? Indirect	When do you plan to collect the data? Spring 2025
Educational Goal 5:			
Description of Assessment Methods: See method under Educational Goals 1; applied to IS 300 and IS 830.	What would indicate that students had met the EG? Instructor's positive assessment	Is this direct or indirect? Indirect	When do you plan to collect the data? Spring 2025.

5) How do you plan on sharing your findings within your unit?

A Spring 2027 SIS pedagogical workshop will focus on the results of the assessment plan process. Findings will first be shared via reports sent to all CFLs in advance of a faculty meeting and then discussed at that meeting. This will allow faculty to continue discussions about our curriculum and educational goals.

6) Assessment Timeline

Next Mid-cycle Review: 2027

Next External Review: 2030.