



To: Jennifer Summit, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
APRC

From: Andrew Harris, Dean of the College of Liberal & Creative Arts

Date: November 5, 2018

Re: International Relations Seventh Cycle Dean's Response

The external Seventh Cycle reviewers conclude that the International Relations Department is a high-quality program that offers unique experiences to its students. At the same time, they have identified recommendations for strategic planning around workload, professional development, hiring, communication, and reframing the goals of the program:

1. *Workload inequity*: MA thesis second readers should be assigned rather than selected by students, and a trained and compensated advisor be designated on a rotating basis.
2. *Faculty Professional Development*: More funds allocated to hire graduate research assistants.
3. *Tenure Track Hiring*: More faculty hired who can teach quantitative methods with an emphasis in international securities or international law/diplomacy to fill important gaps in the curriculum.
4. *Communication*: Better communication with alumni, a more student user-friendly website, and more opportunities for collegial interchange among faculty.
5. *Curriculum*: Reevaluating the senior project to require several shorter papers rather than one longer paper, and rethinking the program's learning goals so that they reflect measurable outcomes.

Dean's Recommendation

I commend the International Relations Department on a well-written and reflective self-study, and thank the reviewers for the thoughtful and thorough review. It is clear based on the department's data collection that students are engaged and satisfied overall with the experience they have had/are having in the program.

The importance of advising cannot be overstated. In addition to the model proposed here, there are other models for advising effectiveness that would address the issues of both equity and quality of advising, such as distributing advising responsibilities across all tenure track faculty. I also encourage, with the reviewers' sensible and fair recommendations in mind, a departmental discussion about a more equitable distribution of advising responsibilities in the MA program. Regarding professional development

support, this year the college increased the student employment funds allocated to IR, though it is the department's decision whether to allocate those to research assistants, graduate instructional assistants, or other responsibilities. Other internal grant funds run through ORSP can also be used for research assistants. As the college's ability to support department budgets depends on declining revenue from other university sources, our ability to provide non-competitive funds in support of student assistance has also declined.

It is also important for the department to engage in planning conversation about future tenure track hiring priorities, balancing interest in expanding into new areas with the expressed (and externally validated) need to fill critical core gaps such as international security, international law and quantitative research methods. It is notable that the last two hiring requests did not seek to fill gaps described by the reviewers and the department, that the department made no request for positions this year, and that the department's tenure density is relatively high within the college. This suggests too that while the department and external reviewers have made a compelling case for the value of remaining separate from Political Science, one consequence of that separation is that IR will need to pursue further collaborations with other programs, including Political Science, to supplement its current capacity of expertise if it wants to bring the desired diversity of expertise to its students. Without a significant increase in students and subsequent faculty lines, the department will not be able to support the range of specializations it desires.

I trust that the department will also discuss the curricular recommendations made by the reviewers. With continued commitment to excellence in the International Relations Department, the department is well-poised to continue offering a high-quality student experience.